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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

DISSATISFACTION AND STRESS OF PRINCIPALS IN NORTHERN ALBERTA

by

© DONALD F. CHRYSANTHOU

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1992

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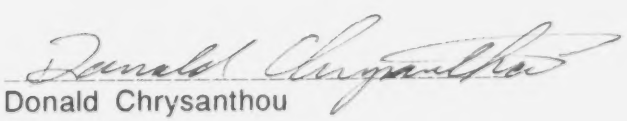

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled DISSATISFACTION AND STRESS OF PRINCIPALS IN NORTHERN ALBERTA submitted by Donald F. Chrysanthou in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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Date: May 4, 1992

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the sources of dissatisfaction and stress in the work experience of school principals in non-urban areas of northern Alberta. Its two-fold goal was to determine the sources of dissatisfaction and stress for these principals as a whole; and to see if specific dissatisfiers and stressors varied among a variety of sub-groups of the total population of principals within the same geographical area.

Questionnaires were sent to 202 school principals in northern Alberta and 146 were returned for a rate of return of 72%. The questionnaire, which was divided into four parts, sought information on school and administrator demographics; job satisfaction (using a pre-selected list); job stress (using a pre-selected list); and dissatisfiers and stressors reported by principals in response to open-ended questions.

Major findings of the study were:

1. Principals as a group indicated that the amount of work they had to do and the time it took to do that work, along with the rewards and recognition they received (or did not receive) for their work were major sources of dissatisfaction.
2. Principals as a group indicated that the amount of work that was required and the lack of time in which to do it were among the greatest sources of stress. Concerns regarding school programs and problems with staff and students, were also chosen frequently as stressors.

3. When principals were asked to identify freely those situations or conditions from their experience which caused them dissatisfaction, they still indicated that workload and insufficient time were among their most serious concerns. However, people-related problems including those associated with students, staff and parents eclipsed concerns related to rewards and recognition to figure prominently as sources of dissatisfaction.

4. When principals were asked to identify freely those situations or conditions from their experience which caused them stress, parents were mentioned as the number one source. Workload and concerns with staff or student problems were still listed but they were joined by several outside-the-school factors. Specifically, Central Office, Funding, Community and the Board were all listed as sources of stress.

5. Principals in small schools claimed greater dissatisfaction and higher stress than principals of larger schools. Principals in county schools reported more stress than principals in other jurisdictions. Teaching administrators exhibited greater dissatisfaction and higher stress than non-teaching administrators.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer expresses his gratitude to the following people whose time, effort and support contributed to the completion of this thesis:

To my thesis advisor, Dr. D. Friesen, for his interest, patience, support and guidance.

To Dr. D.M. Richards and Dr. C.H. Preitz who served as committee members, for their time, patience and valuable advice.

To my wife Shirley, for her understanding, support and encouragement.

To my children for their patience while all of this was going on and their assistance stuffing and licking all those envelopes.

To Mrs. C. Prokop for her assistance in the analysis of the data.

To Mrs. Friesen, for her patience and understanding all the evenings her husband met with me at the university.

To the administrators of the schools in northern Alberta who took the time to complete the survey and return it to the researcher.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

Introduction

The population of Alberta north of Edmonton is less than half the population of the area to the south, yet it is spread over a greater geographical region. As a result, there are few large concentrations of population in the North. The smaller concentrations that are present are usually physically distant from one another.

Population concentrations may exist because they lie along transportation routes, are close to a recreation area or are near some type of resource development. For whatever reason, people live in these centres and no matter what other services may be lacking, nearly all of them have a school.

The Northern Alberta Development Council's 1985 Inventory of Infrastructure for Northern Alberta Communities lists the services available in selected settlements in northern Alberta. A survey of 84 communities, excluding Indian reserves, Metis settlements and summer villages found that along with other services which were available, eighty-eight percent (88%) of the communities had a school. Compared to this, only twenty-seven percent (27%) had a hospital (see Table 1).

Any teacher with aspirations to a position as an administrator, will realize, if only from reading the newspaper, that vacancies for principals rarely occur in major population centres. The

Table 1.0
Services Available in Eight-four
Northern Alberta Communities

Type of Service	Number and Percentage of Communities In Which Service Is Available: Number	Percentage
Hospital	23	27.4
Health Nurse	30	35.7
Resident Dentist	20	23.8
School	74	88.1
Police Protection	26	31.0
Bank	44	52.4
Local Newspaper	26	31.0
Arena	36	42.9
Garbage Collection	40	47.6
Library	40	47.6

communities of the north and the schools that are associated with them are often where a new principal gets his or her first experience. As Beckner reminds administrators,

> . . .keep in mind that approximately one-third of all public school students are currently enrolled in non-metropolitan schools. They actually outnumber those in central city schools. . . .also keep in mind that the 1980 census (United States) showed that there has been heavy migration to the South and West and to rural areas and smaller communities, which is expected to continue throughout the 1980s. (1983, p. 8)

Reports from the 1990 census in the United States have verified that the population trends to the South and West did continue.

In Alberta continued resource development could mean a shift in settlement patterns toward the north. The AlPac pulp and paper mill under construction in the Athabasca area is an example of this type of influence. Already school authorities are considering the impact of this development which will not open for another year.

While it is possible that the "advantages" of rural living may contribute positively to the atmosphere of schools in the north, teachers and particularly administrators may find themselves faced with unique situations and problems. Beckner points out that "the incidence of poverty and low achievement is higher in rural schools than in metropolitan schools" (1983, p. 8). Since many of the schools in northern Alberta are located in non-metropolitan areas, Beckner's point may be particularly relevant. It is possible that there are conditions or situations which may counteract some or all of the perceived "advantages" of rural life and make the job of the administrator more difficult.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the work experience of school principals in non-urban areas of northern Alberta. Its two-fold goal was to determine the sources of dissatisfaction and stress for these principals as a whole; and to see if specific stressors or dissatisfiers varied among a variety of sub-groups of the total population of principals within the same geographical area.

Statement of the Problem

The aim of this study was to identify the sources and degree of dissatisfaction and stress experienced by the principals of schools in northern Alberta. The study examined the following problems:

1. What aspects of their work were viewed by principals of schools in northern Alberta as their major dissatisfiers?
2. What experiences of principals of schools in northern Alberta were viewed as major stressors?
3. What aspects of their work do principals in northern Alberta identify as their major sources of dissatisfaction?
4. What experiences of principals of schools in northern Alberta were viewed as major sources of stress?
5. How are the dissatisfiers and stressors identified by principals in northern Alberta schools related to selected characteristics of schools and principals?

Problem 5 was divided into the following sub-problems:

5.1 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers

identified by principals and the size of the school they worked in?

5.2 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the size of the school they worked in?

5.3 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and type of jurisdiction they were employed by?

5.4 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and type of jurisdiction they were employed by?

5.5 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the configuration of the school they worked in?

5.6 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the configuration of the school they worked in?

5.7 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the distance of the school from town?

5.8 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the distance of the school from town?

5.9 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the distance of the school from Central Office?

5.10 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the distance of the school from Central Office?

5.11 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the teaching assignment of the principal?

5.12 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the teaching assignment of the principal?

5.13 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the level of experience of the principal?

5.14 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the level of experience of the principal?

Justification

Weldon Beckner (1983) has stated that,

> During the years of rapid industrial growth and urbanization, school districts were consolidated and school buildings became larger. Most educators began to assume that what was right for urban/suburban education was also right for education in small towns and rural communities. (p. 7)

This statement leads one to assume that if urban/suburban educational practices are being applied to rural education, then the problems and situations encountered in rural education must be similar to those found in larger centres.

This study targeted the principals of rural schools in northern Alberta. It may be that a comparison of the results obtained in this study with the results of other studies could indicate changes that occur in the role of the principal as the professional environment changes. This information could prove valuable in preparing first-time administrators or in preparing school district policies as they relate to the administration of schools and expectations such policies place on principals.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were used.

Small School--a school having eight or fewer full-time equivalents of certified staff.

Medium School--a school having more than eight but fewer than 17 full-time equivalents of certified staff.

Large School--a school having more than 17 full-time equivalents of certified staff.

Stressor--a situation or occurrence which causes stress to an administrator.

Dissatisfier--a situation or occurrence which causes feelings of dissatisfaction for an administrator.

Principal--an educator appointed to the top administrative position in a school.

Rural School--any northern Alberta school which is not located in the urban areas of Fort McMurray, Peace River, Grande Prairie or Sturgeon School Division.

Range--the distance people will travel to use a service or obtain a product.

Threshold--the size of the population required to make provision of the service economically feasible.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by:

1. The objectivity and perceptions of the participants.
2. The participation rate of principals.
3. The fact that not all participants operate under the same circumstances or have the same amount of experience.
4. The fact that some of the questionnaires were incompletely filled out without explanation.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to:

1. Principals of public and separate schools in school divisions and counties in Alberta, north of Edmonton, excluding those in Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Peace River and Sturgeon School Division.
2. Questionnaires completed and returned by participating principals.
3. Such documents as are used for research and background information.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Rural Schools

A review of related literature has indicated that rural schools have been subjected to a great deal of changing educational policy over the past few decades. Richard Whitfield (1981) has written, regarding the importance of education, that,

> . . .the styles and patterns of provision of education in rural areas have important consequences not simply for children, their families and teachers, but also for communities as a whole in terms of their viability economically, socially and culturally. It is always a mistake to see formal educational provision in isolation from its wider social and economic contexts and nowhere is this principle more starkly illustrated than in relatively sparsely populated areas. . . .(p. 5)

With what were likely the best of intentions, small and rural school education has not been ignored. Rosenfeld and Sher (1977) point out that "by identifying what became widely known as the Rural School Problem, these [rural school reform] leaders created a rationale for a widespread 'modernization' and 'urbanization' of rural schools" (p. 11).

Beckner (1983) supports the view that small and urban schools were treated the same as schools in urban areas. "Small-school educators attempted to imitate their metropolitan counterparts by imposing large-school solutions on small-school problems" (p. 7).

Sher (1977) does report however, that "rural schools are different (p. 5)." This author goes on to point out that the difference arises out of two basic sources: "First, the close relationship

between rural communities and their schools; and second, the size of rural schools and school districts" (p. 5).

It may seem logical to argue that with provincially mandated curriculum and standardized teacher training, the problems of a rural school are those of any school. This is not necessarily the case. Sher (1977) points to the following:

> First, rural schools, unlike small schools elsewhere, must contend with unique problems of sparsity and isolation. This implies more than simply overcoming difficulties caused by geography or distance. It also refers to the fact that rural schools tend to be isolated from the educational, governmental and economic support systems found in metropolitan areas. It also means that sources of assistance to rural schools (from universities, mental health centres, teacher centres, cultural institutions and other potential allies) are notably absent in most regions. (pp. 5-6)

This would seem to indicate that problems encountered in rural schools may be unique.

The Government of Alberta has made one recent attempt to overcome the isolation of small or rural schools by offering selected schools a program of Distance Education. According to the Canadian Education Association (1988), this is part of the "new cost-effective technologies to reduce a number of long-standing problems faced by small schools which represent one-third of all Alberta schools" (p. 7). At this time, Distance Education is still a program which is aimed at the high school grades, leaving the lower nine largely unaffected. At the very least it is another piece of educational policy aimed at the small or rural school in northern Alberta.

Satisfaction

Rice (1978), quoting Knoop and O'Reilly (1976) points out that "the mean level of job satisfaction of teachers in a school was associated with overall effectiveness of the school" (p. 16). Studies by Schoonmaker (1969) and Korman (1971) were referred to by Rice as supporting the idea that "emotional states such as anxiety, frustration and aggressiveness might be consequences of dissatisfaction" (p. 17). Lawler (1973) states that his research shows dissatisfied workers are more likely to quit than satisfied workers. Rice (1978) points out that "this might equally apply to principals as research has indicated that turnover occurs at any level in the organization" (p. 17).

Stress

Friesen, Holdaway and Rice (1983) quote Bennis who feels

> . . .that 'conflicting demands' and the 'turbulent, explosive environment' make leadership difficult, and that the autonomy of leaders has been reduced by organized internal pressure groups, by a litigious society affected by a 'psychology of entitlement,' and by comprehensive regulations imposed by external agencies. (pp. 35-36)

The study by Friesen et al, (1983) examined the satisfaction of urban school administrators in this new environment. In their concluding comments they state that "environmental constraints certainly seem to be quite dissatisfying and can, therefore, make leadership difficult. . . "(p. 56).

Ratsoy (1986a), quoting John Ivancevich and Michael Matteson, identified the following five characteristics as being related to

organizational stress: the job itself; role stress; structure and climate; career progress and job relationships. (p. 5)

Extraorganizational factors such as family; the economy; the community; life events; crime and value changes; were included in the sixth category identified. It could be that the stress created by the first five categories is similar in all schools, simply because they are schools. Legislation and certification requirements for staff may tend to make schools similar. Extraorganizational factors, the sixth category, are not legislated uniformly and may vary greatly from community to community. Perhaps these factors contribute to, or reduce, stress for administrators in rural schools.

Ratsoy (1986b), quoting a study by Ratsoy and Friesen, points out that stress had a number of consequences to the individual which were both physiological (high blood pressure, ulcers, migraine headaches, allergies, asthma and continued muscle tension) and psychological (lowered [staff] morale, self-concept and self-worth). (p. 7)

A question posed by Ratsoy (1986b) is particularly relevant to this study: "What are the unique stresses we experience in our occupation and what are their effects on us and on our students as well as on others with whom we interact (p. 6)?" One aim of this study was to discover what, if any, were the stressors which were unique to rural school principals in Northern Alberta. When these stressors are identified, perhaps appropriate strategies can be put in place to lessen their effects.

Central Place Theory

Urban geographers (Jordan 1979; Rowntree 1979) define a tertiary urban centre as an urban place to facilitate the distribution of goods and the provision of services to the population.

In the early 1930's Walter Christaller formulated the Central Place Theory which describes the location of centres which provide goods and services.

Christaller pointed out that services vary in range (how far people will go to use them) and in threshold (the number of people required to support a particular service). Jordan and Rowntree (1979) cite the following example:

> . . .it requires a larger number of people to support a hospital, university or department store than to support a gasoline station, post office or grocery store. similarly, consumers are willing to travel a greater distance to consult a heart specialist, record a land title or purchase an automobile than to buy a loaf of bread, mail a letter or visit a movie theatre. (p. 373)

Small centres offer low threshold services, those that are supported by few people. These services however, are the most basic. If the population wishes to avail themselves of a higher level of service, they have to travel. The higher the level of service, the greater its range or distance people are willing to travel to use it.

Schools can be seen as low threshold establishments, requiring only a small population to support them. Many of their services are basic (math, social studies, language arts) and have a low range. Some of the more specialized programs (computers, practical arts, second languages) offered by schools however, have a higher threshold and hence greater range. People who wish to take

advantage of these should be prepared to accept the travel required for a higher threshold of service.

Role of the Principal

It can be safely assumed that every school jurisdiction desires to have the best administrators available in its schools. To this end, superintendents will select as administrators those educators who can best fulfill the changing role of the principal. If they are to do this, the question "What is the role of the principal?" must be answered.

Holdaway and Ratsoy (1991) cite the Alberta School Act (1988, p. 14) to answer that question. They state

> . . .that the principal of a school now must provide instructional leadership, ensure that instruction is consistent with provincial courses of study, evaluate or provide for evaluation of programs, manage the school, maintain order and discipline, promote school-community cooperation, supervise evaluation and advancement of students, and take responsibility for the evaluation of teachers. (p. 2)

Holdaway and Ratsoy also cite the Calgary Board of Education (1988). Its criteria for the evaluation of administrators includes:

> . . .demonstrating professional leadership, assisting staff with programs and materials, developing feelings of security and satisfaction, encouraging professional development, working with parent and community groups, developing plans to improve programs, stimulating staff, increasing effectiveness through classroom visits and interviews, arranging workshops and other inservice activities, providing observation opportunities, assisting library development, recognizing achievement, using friendly and understanding approaches and providing an environment conducive to learning. (p. 2)

In addition to these duties, there are difference in schools and their location which can affect the duties associated with the position of the principal. Holdaway and Ratsoy (1991) cite Duignan (1987a) and Crow (1990) who have identified the following conditions as having an effect on the work of the principal.

> . . .urban or rural location of the school; mission and tradition; size of school and school system; public or independent governance; socio-economic characteristics of the area; parental involvement and community support; resources available; linkages between the school and the school system's central administration; grade levels served by the school; characteristics of teachers and other staff members; and characteristics of students. (pp. 2-3)

It is apparent that there are many facets to the modern-day principal and that a wide variety of factors have bearing on the work of this individual. Duignan (1987b) continues however, with three further considerations,

> Three areas of important dilemmas for the principal: (a) administration vs. instructional leadership; (b) accessibility vs. efficiency (i.e., being accessible to students, teachers and parents vs. efficient use of time), and (c) increasing responsibility vs. decreasing authority. (p. 3)

When the complexity and diversity inherent in the role of the principal are considered, the desirability of training for both new and experienced administrators is logical. Holdaway and Ratsoy (1991) conclude their work with this statement regarding the goals of administrative training.

> . . .administrative preparation, whether preservice or inservice, university-based or system-based, should lead to the professionalization of educational administrators. That is, this preparation should provide principals with the conceptual understandings and the practical knowledge and skills needed

for optimal decision making under diverse circumstances, and not merely help them implement policy decisions which may please, or at least not displease, their superordinates. (p. 7)

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

Questionnaire

It was determined that data regarding the dissatisfaction and stress as these phenomena relate to the work experience of principals in Northern Alberta could best be obtained through the use of a questionnaire.

In order to be as certain as possible of obtaining information that was both accurate and detailed, the questionnaire for this study was based on two existing documents: one was used by Friesen and Sarros for their study; the other was used by Ratsoy and Friesen.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Part A requested basic, anonymous data about the school and the principal. It was developed following the form used in other surveys and included only those items which were deemed relevant to the problem in question. With this in mind, item 12, dealing with overall stress, was added.

Part B of the questionnaire sought information on job satisfaction. It was basically the same survey that was used by Friesen and Sarros in their study of the Etilolgy of Administrator Burnout. There were 26 items in this section of the questionnaire.

Responses to the various items for Part B were indicated by the respondents on a Likert scale provided with each item. The scale, which can be found on the questionnaire on appendix p. 122,

ranged from 'zero' (indicating Dissatisfaction) to 'five' (indicating Extreme Satisfaction).

Part C of the questionnaire requested information regarding the stressors experienced by principals and was similar to that used by Ratsoy and Friesen. There were 23 items in this section.

Likert scales were provided for respondents in this section as well. In this case the scale (indicated on the questionnaire) ranged from 'zero' (Not Stressful) to 'five' (Extremely Stressful).

Both parts B and C were tailored to meet the particular needs of this study by having items added or deleted wherever it was appropriate.

Part D of the questionnaire consisted of two open-ended questions which asked for information about specific stressors and dissatisfiers experienced by school principals in small or rural schools in Northern Alberta. Each principal was asked to identify and given an opportunity to explain his or her two most stressful and two most dissatisfying experiences.

Experience has shown that time (or the lack of it) is generally an important consideration for most school principals. It was therefore assumed that a questionnaire that demanded a minimum of time to complete would probably elicit a better rate of return. This questionnaire, though five pages in length, was designed to be quick to complete with 62 of the 64 questions being some variation of multiple-choice.

With the questionnaire complete, the study was submitted for ethical review. Approval was granted with no problem.

Sample and Response

This study surveyed the principals of 202 Northern Alberta schools. This sample was selected from the List of Operating Schools in Alberta for the 1990-1991 school year.

Schools which were chosen to be included in the survey were in school divisions and counties, including separate schools, north of the city of Edmonton. Private schools, provincial government schools, Department of National Defense schools, Department of Indian Affairs schools, and Hutterite colony schools were excluded from this study because of their unique situations. Also excluded from this study were schools in St. Albert, Sturgeon School Division, Grande Prairie, Peace River and Fort McMurray. Schools in these areas are either within urban areas or close to Edmonton. Including them could have been seen as repeating work already done on urban administrators.

The questionnaire for this study, including a stamped, self-addressed return envelope, was mailed to all schools in the sample. The covering letter was modelled on the letter used by F. Alexandruk in his study of school-based budgeting and was used with his permission.

Due to the remote location of some of the schools in the sample and indeed, the remote location of the point of mailing, it was decided to wait two weeks from the date the questionnaire was mailed before sending a follow-up letter which would hopefully encourage principals to respond.

Response to the survey was impressive. In excess of 50% of the questionnaires were returned prior to the mailing of the follow-

up letter. In light of the rapid response, it was decided not to mail the follow-up letter. The final response rate was 71.2% of the questionnaires mailed.

Preparation for Analysis

Upon receipt, each of the returned questionnaires was removed from its envelope. Each was given a quick inspection in an attempt to catch any problems or abnormalities which might cause trouble during the analysis of the data. One questionnaire was returned completely blank. It was removed from the returned responses and was not included in the total as a returned questionnaire.

All of the items which employed a Likert scale as a response mechanism were coded for analysis when the questionnaire was created. This meant that only the two open-ended questions dealing with individual principal's daily experience had to be coded after the questionnaire was completed.

Each of the open-ended questions had space for two responses for a total of four open-ended responses. Coding these responses for computer analysis proceeded as follows:

A questionnaire was selected at random from the pile of responses. The first response to the question, "Please list two aspects of your work as principal that are most dissatisfying to you" was given the code number one. The second response was coded as number two. As coding of responses to this question proceeded, every new response was given a new code number. If an answer was the same as one which was already coded, it was given the code number already assigned for that response.

The same process was carried out for the question, "Please list two aspects of your work as principal which are most stressful to you." A separate code was used for each question.

After 30 questionnaires had been coded in this manner, the process was reviewed. It was found that some responses were very similar yet had different code numbers. These responses were grouped together and given a single code number. The coding process was then tried again on thirty different questionnaires. The revised coding process was noticeably more efficient. Two more separately coded responses were grouped together after this second trial. Following the two trials, all the questionnaires, including those of the trial groups, were coded for a third and final time.

Blanks in the open-ended section of the questionnaire were coded as 'no response'.

Analysis of Data

Once the coding was complete, the questionnaires were separated into three groups: those which came from small schools, those from medium-sized schools and those from large schools. The data were analyzed using SPSS-X (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and included analysis of variance, T-tests, correlation and percentages.

The material obtained in the open-ended section of the question was analyzed in an attempt to discover patterns within the groups and to check for differences between them. The comments provided by the responses in this section were used to attempt to

find specific reasons or situations which might help explain the patterns of responses discovered.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY RESULTS: TOTAL SAMPLE

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings obtained from the survey on the dissatisfaction and stress of rural school principals in northern Alberta. Two hundred and two questionnaires were sent to principals in selected schools in northern Alberta. One hundred and forty-six of these were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 72.2%. The data from these questionnaires are presented in two separate chapters, each of which is divided into various sub-sections to facilitate the orderly presentation of the survey results.

This chapter contains the analysis of the data obtained from the entire sample of principals in northern Alberta schools. This chapter is divided into five sections: Demographic Information, Dissatisfiers, Stressors, Dissatisfiers (identified through open-ended responses) and Stressors (identified through open-ended responses).

Demographic Information

Gender

Of the 146 principals who responded to the survey 78.8% were male and 21.2% were female.

Age

Principals thirty-five years of age or younger made up 11.7%

of the sample. Almost 20% of the respondents were thirty-six to forty years of age. The largest group, containing 32.2% of the sample, was aged forty-one to forty-five years old. Another 19.9% were aged forty-six to fifty years old and the remaining 15.8% were over the age of fifty. Only one principal admitted an age in excess of sixty years.

Years of Teaching Experience

Those principals having ten or fewer years of teaching experience made up 11.6% of the sample. Exactly 74% of the principals were distributed over the fifteen year range of eleven to twenty-five years of experience. Those with more than twenty-six years of experience made up 14.4%.

Years of Administrative Experience

When asked to indicate their years of administrative experience, 17.8% of the principals said they had two years or less of experience. Those who had between three and five years made up 15.1% while those with six to ten years, the largest single group, accounted for 25.3% of the sample. The next group, those with eleven to fifteen years of experience accounted for 18.5%. Those principals with sixteen or more years of experience accounted for the final 22.6%.

Years in Present Position

Nearly one-third of the respondents, 30.1%, indicated that they had one year or less of experience in their present position.

Principals who had between two and five years of experience accounted for 37% of the sample. The remaining third of the respondents, 32.9%, claimed six or more years of experience in their present school. Two principals, 1.4%, had been in their schools for more than twenty-six years.

Teaching Assignment

Over three-quarters of the principals, 76.7%, indicated that they did have a regular teaching assignment in addition to administrative duties while the remaining 22.6% said that they did not have that responsibility.

Description of School

A clear majority of the principals, 78.1%, worked in a school that offered a kindergarten program; 37% were in a kindergarten to grade six school; 26% were in kindergarten to grade nine schools and 15.1% were in kindergarten to grade twelve schools.

The remaining 21.9% of the principals were in grade seven to grade nine, grade seven to grade twelve or grade ten to grade twelve schools.

Number of Teachers in the School (FTE)

Principals of schools having eight or fewer Full-Time Equivalents (FTE) of staff made up 31.5% of the sample population. Principals of schools with between nine and seventeen FTE of staff accounted for 30.1% and the remaining 38.4% was comprised of principals in schools with eighteen or more FTE of staff. The mean

number of teachers for the entire sample was fourteen and a half FTE of staff.

Jurisdiction

Just over 51% of the schools in the sample were in a school division while 39.7% were in a county. Only 8.9% reported being in some other, unspecified type of school jurisdiction.

Distance to Nearest Town

About 45% of the principals surveyed said that their school was less than 30 km from the nearest town. Principals in schools between 31 and 50 km from town made up 19.2% of the sample and 20.5% were between 51 and 100 km from town. Principals in schools over 100 km from town made up 11.6% of the sample.

Distance to Central Office

Principals in 23.3% of the schools said that they were less than 2 km from their Central Office. Distances of between 2 and 25 km were reported by 18.5% of the respondents. Principals in schools more than 25 km from Central Office accounted for 58.2% of the sample with 31.5% being more than 50 km away.

How Stressful Do You Find Your Job?

When asked to indicate how stressful they found their jobs to be overall, 30.2% of respondents indicated that it was mildly or not at all stressful. Moderately or considerably stressful was chosen by 57.5% of the principals and 11.6% found the job to be very or extremely stressful.

Dissatisfiers

Principals were given a list of twenty-six conditions or circumstances which could lead to dissatisfaction with their job and asked to indicate how dissatisfying they found each of them to be. Answers were indicated on a five-point Likert scale with '0' meaning "Dissatisfied" and '5' meaning "Extremely Satisfied."

Table 4.1 lists the responses to the 26 items ranked in order from most dissatisfying to least dissatisfying. The discussion presented in this section follows the same order. Table 4.2 provides a detailed summary by percentage, of principals responses to each particular item.

Amount of Work

Of all of the principals surveyed, 30.9% indicated that they were either dissatisfied or only slightly satisfied with the amount of work they had to do. Principals who were moderately satisfied made up 19.9% of the sample and those who were considerably satisfied represented 29.5%. The remaining 19.1% of the principals were either very or extremely satisfied with the amount of work they had to do.

Extra Tasks Associated with Your Position

About 28.7% of the responding principals were only slightly satisfied or dissatisfied with the extra tasks they had to deal with. Principals who were moderately satisfied made up 19.9% of the sample and those who were considerably satisfied made up 29.5%.

Table 4.1
Dissatisfiers of Principals
(ranked most to least dissatisfying)

1. Amount of Work
2. Extra Tasks Associated with Position
3. Praise Received for Doing a Good Job
4. Advancement Opportunities
5. Fringe Benefits
6. Chance to Tell People What to Do
7. Methods Used in Promotion
8. Recognition by Others for Your Work
9. Salary
10. Physical Working Conditions
11. Intellectual Stimulation
12. Status in the Community
13. Degree of Involvement in Important Decisions
14. Degree of Autonomy
15. Degree of Accountability for Your Work

16.5 Sense of Accomplishment

16.5 Overall Satisfaction

18. Job Security
19. Relationships with Superordinates
20. Freedom to Use Own Methods
21. Social Relationships at Work
22. Freedom to Use Own Judgement
23. Opportunities to Use Your Abilities
24. Chance to Help Others
25. Relationships with Colleagues
26. Relationships with Subordinates

Table 4.2
Dissatisfiers of Principals
Detailed Summary of Responses

Item	Percentage					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Job Security	4.8	5.5	8.9	18.5	36.3	26.0
Chance to help other people	0.0	1.4	4.8	19.2	54.1	20.5
Chance to tell people what to do	2.1	7.5	25.3	34.2	17.1	8.2
Opportunity to use abilities	0.7	1.4	9.6	16.4	47.3	24.0
Fringe Benefits	8.2	11.0	17.1	24.7	28.1	10.3
Salary	6.2	5.5	18.5	31.5	27.4	11.0
Amount of work required	15.1	15.8	19.9	29.5	16.4	2.7
Advancement opportunities	8.9	11.6	22.6	26.7	22.6	6.8
Freedom to use own judgement	1.4	4.1	6.8	18.5	46.6	22.6
Freedom to use own methods	0.7	4.1	7.5	22.6	47.3	17.1
Relationships with subordinates	0.0	0.7	4.8	10.3	54.1	29.5
Relationships with colleagues	0.7	0.7	3.4	15.8	49.3	30.1
Relationships with superordinates	1.4	4.8	8.9	19.9	45.9	18.5
Methods used in promotion	6.8	8.2	13.0	37.0	28.8	5.5
Extra tasks. . .	12.3	16.4	19.9	29.5	17.8	3.4
Physical working conditions	6.2	7.5	12.3	21.9	34.9	15.8
Praise you get. . .	10.3	14.4	16.4	34.2	19.2	5.5
Degree of autonomy	2.7	2.1	11.0	30.8	41.8	11.6
Sense of accomplishment	2.1	4.1	8.9	26.7	44.5	13.7
Degree of invovlement in important decisions	4.1	2.7	11.0	24.0	45.2	12.3
Degree of accountability	2.1	3.4	8.2	26.7	52.1	7.5
Status in the community	3.4	4.8	7.5	29.5	42.5	12.3
Recognition by others. . .	4.1	8.2	14.4	37.0	29.5	6.8
Social relationships at work	2.1	1.4	8.9	21.9	43.8	21.9
Intellectual stimulaion	3.4	4.8	8.9	39.0	34.2	9.6
Overall satisfaction	1.4	2.1	9.6	29.5	47.9	9.6

Key

0 Dissatisfied
1 Slightly satisfied
2 Moderatley satisfied
3 Considerably satisfied
4 Very satisfied
5 Extremely satisfied

About 21% of the respondents indicated that they were very or extremely satisfied in dealing with extra tasks.

Praise You Get for Doing a Good Job

When asked to indicate how they felt about the praise they received, 24.7% of the respondents indicated that they were either dissatisfied or only slightly satisfied. Half of the sample, 50.6% said they were either moderately or considerably satisfied and 24.7% said they were very or extremely satisfied.

Advancement Opportunities

Exactly 20.5% of the respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied or only slightly satisfied with the advancement opportunities available to them. Moderately satisfied principals made up 22.6% of the sample and considerably satisfied principals accounted for 26.7%. Those who were either very or considerably satisfied with advancement opportunities made up the remaining 29.4%.

Fringe Benefits

When asked about fringe benefits, 19.2% of respondents were either dissatisfied or only slightly satisfied. Moderately satisfied principals accounted for 17.1% of the respondents and considerably satisfied principals represented 24.7%. The largest group of respondents, 28.1%, were very satisfied with their fringe benefits and 10.3% were extremely satisfied.

The Chance to Tell People What to Do

Only 9.6% of the respondents indicated that they were either dissatisfied or only slightly satisfied with the chance they had to tell others what to do. Moderately or considerably satisfied principals made up 59.5% of the sample while those who were either very or extremely satisfied with this item represented 25.3%.

Methods Used in Promotion

When asked about methods used in promotion, dissatisfied, only slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied principals made up 28.0% of the sample. Thirty-seven percent of respondents were considerably satisfied and 36.5% were either very or extremely satisfied.

Recognition by Others for Your Work

When asked about the recognition they received for their work, dissatisfied, only slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied principals made up 26.3% of the sample. Principals who were moderately satisfied accounted for an even 37.0% and those who were either very or extremely satisfied made up the remaining 37.3%.

Salary

Only 11.7% of the respondents indicated that they were either dissatisfied or only slightly satisfied with their salary. Moderately satisfied principals accounted for 18.5% and those that were considerably satisfied made up 31.5% of the sample. Those

principals who were very satisfied with their salary accounted for 27.4% and the remaining 11.0% said they were extremely satisfied.

Physical Working Conditions

Nearly 14% of responding principals indicated that they were either dissatisfied or only slightly satisfied with their physical working conditions. Those who were moderately or considerably satisfied accounted for 34.7% of the principals while those who were very or extremely satisfied represented the remaining 50.7% of the sample.

Intellectual Stimulation

Only 17.2% of respondents were dissatisfied, only slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied with the intellectual stimulation they received from their jobs. Those who were considerably, very or extremely satisfied represented the remaining 82.8% of the sample.

Status in the Community

The mode response for this possible dissatisfier was 'very satisfied' with 54.8% of the responding principals either very or extremely satisfied. A further 29.5% stated that they were considerably satisfied with their status in the community. The remaining 15.7% said they were either dissatisfied, slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied.

Degree of Involvement in Important Decisions

'Very satisfied' was the mode response to this possible dissatisfier with 57.5% of respondents indicating that they were either very or extremely satisfied. Considerably satisfied principals made up 24.0% of the sample. The remaining 17.8% of the principals indicated that they were dissatisfied, slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied.

Degree of Autonomy

The response given most often when principals were asked about their satisfaction with their degree of autonomy was 'very satisfied', accounting for 41.8% of the responses with a further 11.6% stating they were extremely satisfied. Principals who were only considerably satisfied with their degree of autonomy made up the next largest group, representing 30.8% of the sample. Those who were dissatisfied, slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied made up the remaining 15.8%.

Degree of Accountability for Your Work

The mode response for this possible dissatisfier was 'very satisfied' (52.1%) with those principals who were either very or extremely satisfied accounting for 59.6% of the sample. Those principals who were considerably satisfied represented 26.7% of the respondents. Principals who were dissatisfied, slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied accounted for the remaining 13.7%.

Sense of Accomplishment

The most commonly indicated response for this possible dissatisfier was 'very satisfied' with those principals who were either very or extremely satisfied representing 58.2% of the sample. Considerably satisfied principals accounted for 26.7% of the respondents while those who were dissatisfied, slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied made up the remaining 15.1% of the principals.

Overall Satisfaction

When asked to rate their overall satisfaction with their jobs, the largest group of principals, representing 47.9% of the sample, chose 'very satisfied.' A further 9.6% said they were extremely satisfied. Twenty-nine point five percent of the respondents indicated that they were considerably satisfied while 13.1% were dissatisfied, slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied.

Job Security

The mode response for this possible dissatisfier was 'very satisfied' and was chosen by just over one-third of the respondents. Those who were either very satisfied (36.3%) and those who were extremely satisfied (26.0%) accounted for 62.3% of all principals. Of the remaining principals, 18.5% indicated that they were considerably satisfied while those that were dissatisfied, slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied made up 19.2% of the sample.

Relationships with Superordinates

When asked to indicate their level of satisfaction regarding

their relationships with their superordinates, the most frequently chosen answer was 'very satisfied' with 64.8% of the principals being either very or extremely satisfied. Considerably satisfied principals accounted for 19.9% of the sample. Those principals who were dissatisfied, slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied made up the remaining 15.1%.

Freedom to Use Your Own Methods

The mode response for this possible dissatisfier was 'very satisfied' with 64.4% of respondents being either very or extremely satisfied. Considerably satisfied principals made up 22.6% of the sample while those who were dissatisfied, slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied made up the remaining 12.3%.

Social Relationships at Work

The most frequently chosen response for this possible dissatisfier was 'very satisfied,' representing 43.8% of the sample. A further 21.9% said that they were 'extremely satisfied' and this same percentage applied to those principals who were considerably satisfied. Principals who were dissatisfied, slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied accounted for 12.4% of the sample.

Freedom to Use Your Own Judgement

When asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with their freedom to use their own judgement, the mode response was 'very satisfied' (46.6%) with 67.2% of the respondents being either very or extremely satisfied. Considerably satisfied principals made up

18.5% of the sample while those who were dissatisfied, slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied accounted for the remaining 12.3%.

Opportunity to Use Your Abilities

The majority of principals (47.3%) indicated that they were very satisfied with the opportunities they had to use their abilities. A further 24.0% said they were extremely satisfied. Sixteen point four percent indicated that they were considerably satisfied while the remaining 11.7% indicated that they were dissatisfied, slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied.

Chance to Help Others

Over half of the principals (54.1%) indicated that they were 'very satisfied' with a total of 74.6% being either very or extremely satisfied with their opportunity to help others. Considerably satisfied principals accounted for 19.2% of the sample while only 6.2% of the principals were slightly or moderately satisfied. None of the principals surveyed indicated that they were dissatisfied with their chance to help others.

Relationships with Colleagues

The most commonly chosen response with regard to this possible dissatisfier was 'very satisfied' which accounted for 49.3% of the sample. Those who were extremely satisfied accounted for another 30.1%. Considerably satisfied principals made up 15.8% of

the sample while only 4.8% of the principals indicated being dissatisfied, slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied.

Relationships with Subordinates

Over half (54.1%) of the responding principals indicated that they were very satisfied with their relationships with their subordinates. Those who were extremely satisfied accounted for 29.5% giving a total of 83.6% of principals who were either very or extremely satisfied. Considerably satisfied principals made up 10.3% of the sample while those who were slightly satisfied or moderately satisfied accounted for 5.5%. No principal indicated that he was dissatisfied with his relationships with his subordinates.

Stressors

Principals were given a list of 23 possible stressors and asked to indicate how stressful they found each of them to be. Answers were indicated on a five-point Likert scale with '0' meaning "Not Stressful" and '5' meaning "Extremely Stressful."

Table 4.3 lists the responses to the 23 items ranked in order from most to least stressful. The discussion presented in this section follows the same order. Table 4.4 provides a summary by percentage, of principals responses to each particular item.

Heavy Workload

When asked to indicate the level of stress they felt from their workload, a total of 48.6% of the principals indicated that they felt considerable or moderate stress. Principals who felt their jobs

Table 4.3
Stressors of Principals
(ranked most to least stressful)

1.	Heavy Workload
2.5	Curriculum Changes Implemented Before Materials Available
2.5	Unmotivated Students
4.	Lack of Time During the Day to Get Things Done
5.	Conflict Situations
6.	Requirement to Make Frequent Role Changes
7.	Problem Teachers
8.	Disruptive Students
9.	Lack of Proper Placement for Special Needs Students
10.	Dealing with Burned-0ut Staff
11.	Changing Provincial Philosophy with Regard to Programs
12.	Accommodating to Curriculum Changes
13.	Rapid Curriculum Change
14.	Time Spent Dealing with Community Demands
15.	Volume of Student Evaluation Activities
16.	Lack of Parental Support
17.	Student Marks Used to Evaluate Teachers
18.	Changing Role of Central Office
19.	Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff
20.	Construction of a Workable Timetable
21.	Insufficient Salary for Work Done
22.	Over-sized Classes
23.	Mail and Supplies from Central Office

Table 4.4
Stressors of Principals
Detailed Summary of Responses

Item	Percentage					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Over-sized classes	26.7	23.3	24.0	13.7	8.2	3.4
Lack of proper placement for special needs students	6.2	17.8	25.3	24.7	20.5	4.8
Frequent role changes	8.2	11.6	22.6	28.8	16.4	12.3
Accommodating to curr. change	6.2	13.0	33.6	32.2	13.7	1.4
Student evaluation activities	6.8	19.9	34.9	23.3	13.7	0.7
Disruptive students	2.7	13.7	35.6	19.9	17.1	11.0
Heavy workload	1.4	12.3	20.5	28.1	22.6	15.1
Lack of parental support	11.0	23.3	26.0	21.2	13.7	4.8
Lack of time	2.7	17.8	20.5	23.3	19.2	16.4
Changing provincial philosophy	4.8	18.5	28.8	27.4	13.7	6.8
Insufficient salary	26.7	19.9	21.2	14.4	10.3	7.5
Curriculum changes before materials available	3.4	17.8	15.1	28.1	19.9	15.8
Changing role of Central Office	17.8	25.3	16.4	17.8	13.7	7.5
Student marks used to evaluate teachers	18.5	24.0	15.1	11.6	15.1	11.0
Unmotivated students	2.7	11.0	19.9	34.2	24.0	8.2
Conflict situations	2.7	14.4	19.2	32.2	21.9	8.9
Rapid curriculum change	4.8	19.9	32.9	23.3	12.3	6.2
Burned-out staff	10.3	16.4	24.0	19.9	19.9	8.2
Problem teachers	11.0	16.4	15.1	18.5	24.0	13.7
Community demands	6.2	22.6	27.4	27.4	14.4	2.1
Recruitment and retention of qualified staff	13.7	21.9	28.8	17.8	14.4	2.7
Mail and supplies from Central Office	28.1	32.9	19.2	11.6	6.2	2.1
Timetable construction	19.9	26.0	23.3	13.7	12.3	4.8

Key

0 Not stressful
1 Mildly stressful
2 Moderately stressful
3 Considerably stressful
4 Very stressful
5 Extremely stressful

were very or extremely stressful represented 37.7% of the sample. The response 'considerably stressful' was chosen by 28.1% of the principals. The remaining 13.7% felt their jobs were mildly or not at all stressful.

Curriculum Changes Implemented Before Materials Available

Not having the materials available to keep pace with curriculum change was seen as moderately or considerably stressful by 43.2% of respondents with considerably stressful being chosen most often. This occurrence was deemed to be very or extremely stressful by 35.7% of respondents with 21.4% seeing it as mildly or not at all stressful.

Unmotivated Students

Over half the principals surveyed, 54.1%, indicated that unmotivated students were moderately or considerably stressful. Nearly a full third, 32.2% saw them as very or extremely stressful. The remaining 13.7% indicated that unmotivated students were either mildly or not at all stressful to them.

Lack of Time During the Day to Get Things Done

The mode response for this stressor was 'considerably stressful' at 23.3%. More than one third of the sample, 35.6%, felt more stress than this, stating they felt lack of time to be very (19.2%) or extremely (16.4%) stressful. Principals reporting moderate stress accounted for 20.5% while those who felt no stress or only mild stress made up the remaining 20.5%.

Conflict Situations

The largest group of principals, 32.2%, stated that they found conflict situations to be considerably stressful. Nearly as many, 30.8% found them to be very or extremely stressful while 19.2% found them to be only moderately stressful. Not stressful or mildly stressful were chosen by 17.1% of the respondents.

Requirement to Make Frequent Role Changes

Being required to make frequent role changes was seen as moderately or considerably stressful by 51.4% of the principals. Those who felt role changes to be very or extremely stressful made up 28.7% of the total with 19.8% stating that they found role changes to be mildly or not at all stressful.

Problem Teachers

Data pertaining to the stress caused by problem teachers was widely (and fairly evenly) distributed along the scale. On average, principals stated that they found problem teachers to be somewhere between moderately and considerably stressful. The mode response for this possible stressor was very stressful and 37.7% of the respondents indicted they found problem teachers to be very or extremely stressful. Moderate or considerable stress was chosen by 33.6% of the principals while 27.4% indicated mild stress or no stress at all with problem teachers.

Disruptive Students

The most frequently chosen response with regard to disruptive

students was moderately stressful, chosen by 35.6% of the principals. Almost 20% saw them as considerably stressful, 17.1% saw them as very stressful and 11.0% saw them as extremely stressful. Not stressful or mildly stressful were chosen by 16.4% of the principals.

Lack of Proper Placement for Special Needs Students

Data regarding the stress caused by attempting to place special needs students was evenly distributed along the scale with the exception of extremely stressful which was chosen by only 4.8% of the respondents. Beyond that, the average response was somewhere between moderately and considerably stressful, with 20.5% indicating the situation to be very stressful, 24.7% indicating considerably stressful and 25.3% indicating moderately stressful. Not stressful or mildly stressful were chosen by 24.0%.

Dealing with Burned-Out Staff

Burned-out staff was seen as causing moderate or considerable stress by 43.9% of the principals. Very stressful or extremely stressful was chosen by 28.1% while 26.7% stated that no stress or only mild stress was experienced as a result of having to deal with burned-out staff.

Changing Provincial Philosophy with Regard to Programs

On average changing provincial philosophy ranked between moderately and considerably stressful, with 28.8% choosing the former and 27.4% choosing the latter. Not stressful or mildly

stressful was chosen by 23.3% while 20.5% said it was either very or extremely stressful.

Accommodating to Curriculum Changes

Nearly two-thirds of the principals surveyed (65.8%) said they found accommodating to curriculum changes to be moderately or considerably stressful. Very or extremely stressful was chosen by 15.1% while mildly or not at all stressful was chosen by the remaining 19.2%.

Rapid Curriculum Change

Over half of the respondents (56.2%) indicated that rapid curriculum change caused them moderate or considerable stress. Not stressful or mildly stressful was chosen by 24.7% while very stressful or extremely stressful was chosen by 18.5%.

Time Spent Dealing with Community Demands

The time spent on the demands of the community were listed as not stressful by 6.2% of the principals. Responses excluding not stressful were fairly evenly distributed along the scale with 27.4% choosing moderately stressful and a further 27.4% choosing considerably stressful. Almost 23% of the principals found time spent dealing with community demands to be only mildly stressful while 16.5% found it to be very or extremely stressful.

Volume of Student Evaluation Activities

The most frequently chosen response with regard to the

volume of student evaluation activities was moderately stressful at 34.9% of the sample. Not stressful or mildly stressful was chosen by 26.7% while 23.3% indicated considerable stress. Very stressful or extremely stressful was chosen by 14.4%.

Lack of Parental Support

Lack of parental support was the cause of moderate or considerable stress for 47.2% of the principals. No stress or mild stress was reported by 34.3% while 18.5% of the principals said lack of parental support was very or extremely stressful.

Student Marks Used to Evaluate Teachers

The average response to this possible stressor was moderately stressful. The largest group however, at 42.5%, indicated that the use of student marks to evaluate teachers caused them no stress or only mild stress. Moderate or considerable stress was chosen by 26.7% of the sample while 26.1% chose very or extremely stressful.

Changing Role of Central Office

When asked about the stress induced by the perceived change in the role of Central Office from consultant to inspector, the average response was moderately stressful. It was still seen to be mildly or not at all stressful by 43.1% of the respondents. Moderately or considerably stressful was chosen by 34.2% of the sample while very or extremely stressful accounted for the remaining 21.2%.

Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff

Staffing was seen as moderately or considerably stressful by 46.6% of the respondents while the next largest group, 35.6% saw it as mildly or not at all stressful. The remaining 17.1% saw it as being very or extremely stressful.

Construction of a Workable Timetable

Timetabling was seen to be not stressful or mildly stressful by 45.9% of the principals. Thirty-seven percent saw it as moderately or considerably stressful while the remaining 17.1% said that they found it to be very or extremely stressful.

Insufficient Salary for Work Done

Those who stated that salary was not a cause of stress amounted to 26.7% of the sample with those choosing either not stressful or mildly stressful comprising 46.6%. Moderately or considerably stressful was chosen by 35.6% while very or extremely stressful was chosen by 17.8%.

Over-sized Classes

Exactly 50.0% of the sample said that over-sized classes caused them no stress or only mild stress. Moderate or considerable stress was indicated by 37.7% while the remaining 11.6% of the principals said that over-sized classes were very or extremely stressful.

Mail and Supplies from Central Office

The delivery of mail and supplies from Central Office caused no stress or only mild stress to precisely 60.0% of the sample. Moderate or considerable stress was reported by 30.8% while the remaining 8.3% said it was very or extremely stressful.

Dissatisfiers Reported by Principals

In this section principals were asked to provide information in written form about the two most dissatisfying aspects of their jobs. Table 4.5 lists the ten most frequently occurring responses received in order from most to least dissatisfying. The discussion presented in this section follows the same order.

Amount/Variety of Work

Of the 146 principals, 29 (22.0%) indicated that they found the amount and variety of work they did to be most dissatisfying. One principal from a junior/senior high indicated that there seemed to him to be,

> ". . .an increased number of basics being required of schools, administration and staff."

This view was supported by another principal from the same level of school who commented on, "The constant overburdening of work. Schools accepting more and more responsibility for societal issues and not having the resources to deal with them."

Table 4.5

Dissatisfiers Reported by Principals
Ten Most Frequently Mentioned
(ranked most to least dissatisfying)

	Frequency	Percent
Amount/Variety of Work	29	22.0
Staff Concerns	28	21.2
Paperwork	26	19.7
Parents	24	18.2
Student Discipline Problems	22	16.7
Time	16	12.1
Community Relations	13	9.8
School Programs	12	9.1
Lack of Power	12	9.1
Student Social Problems	9	6.8

Other principals indicated that the tasks associated with the simple day-to-day operation of a school was dissatisfying to them. A principal in a K to 6 school said,

> ". . .the amount of time required to simply maintain the flow of the school through a wide variety of mundane, routine chores."

This was echoed by a K to 9 principal who said,

> "Dealing with too many different jobs and problems. In a small school I am computer consultant, audio-visual expert, scheduling person, teacher, student's union advisor. . . ."

The matter was well summed up by a principal from a K to 9 school who said,

> "Expectations on the principal to be all to everyone. People forget that you're human too."

Staff Concerns

A large number of principals (21.2%) simply indicated that "dealing with incompetent staff" was very dissatisfying to them and left it at that. Those principals who did elaborate covered a wide variety of concerns. One junior/senior high principal said he found it dissatisfying to

> ". . .work with teachers who are not interested in improving and do not consider children to be #1, but pay lip service to this."

Another junior/senior high principal pointed out that working with staff can be very dissatisfying in another way,

> "Spending an inordinate amount of time interviewing, hiring, orienting, working with, helping grow as teachers (informal

and formal evaluations, etc.). See the positive growth then write strong letters of reference to see them go onto 'greener fields'."

One principal indicated that not knowing how to act with his staff was dissatisfying.

"Shifting expectations of staff members. They occasionally want to be collegial, occasionally subordinates. . . unwilling to see 'teamwork' as important."

Paperwork

Nearly 20% of the responding principals indicated that they found the amount of paperwork to be very dissatisfying. A wide variety of adjectives were used to describe both the amount and nature of the paperwork but one elementary school principal summed matters up nicely, saying he found dissatisfying "The ever-increasing amount of paper that crosses my desk, requiring time (which is not available) and having no value to the improvement of instruction."

Parents

Dissatisfaction with parents was indicated by 18.2% of the principals. Generally, concerns fell into two groups: parents who were not concerned or involved with the education of the their children.

"Working with parents who do not care about their children's education." (Junior high principal).

"Attempting to get some parents to understand that they have

a major role in their child's education" (Elementary principal). The second group of parents which caused dissatisfaction was the group which 'complains.'

> "Dealing with parental complaints from uninformed (or misinformed) people or people on a soap-box" (Senior high principal).
>
> "Working with impossible-to-please parents and with students who are just plain impossible" (Elementary-junior high principal).
>
> "Parents who grumble in the community but never call the teacher or myself to solve a problem" (Elementary-junior high principal).

Student Discipline Problems

Principals who indicated dissatisfaction with discipline amounted to 16.7% of the sample. Many simply indicated that they disliked dealing with 'disruptive students' or 'discipline problems'. Those who chose to give more details covered a variety of aspects of the discipline question.

> "I have to forfeit classroom excellence for the world of disputes and grievances" (Elementary school principal).
>
> "Pupil discipline and control--the growing uneasiness and disrespect among students" (Elementary school principal).
>
> "Disruptive students who continually occupy my time during any given day. Most of the disruptive behavior is caused by students who come from homes where discipline is non-existent. These students find the restricting school

environment too much to cope with" (Elementary school principal).

"Dealing and redealing with problem students--especially those who start, quit, try again next semester and really have no interest except to stay warm and socialize. It is our job to work with these students but the lack of positive results is extremely frustrating" (Junior/Senior high principal).

"Overemphasis on discipline--it is difficult to move ahead when all of one's time is taken up with 'management duties'" (Junior high principal).

Time

Time was listed by 12.1% of the principals as a cause of dissatisfaction. The responses could be divided into three major groups which centered around common concerns.

Principals indicated that they found there was simply not enough time for them to do everything they felt they had to do.

"Time--the lack of it to do things like professional reading, more chats with individual staff members. . . ." (Elementary school principal).

"Not enough time during the day/week/month/year to meet deadlines and achieve those things that we would like to" (K to 12 principal).

Secondly, principals expressed some concern about the effects of their attention to duty on their outside or family life.

"It seems that family time for us just doesn't count" (K to 9 principal).

"I'm working all the time; can't build a balanced life" (K to 9 principal).

The third group can be identified as having contractual and compensation concerns.

"Lack of administrative time to complete all of the work put on me by the Central Office, Department of Education and myself to try and provide a quality education program. Along with the extra time required, compensating pay would be nice" (K to 9 principal).

"Lack of administrative time. As administrator I am required to put in many extra hours to fulfill the tasks required. Time off of teaching duties to attend to menial administrative duties would be nice" (Elementary school principal).

"Don't get prep. time contrary to collective agreement and only 50% of the administrative time" (K to 9 principal).

Community Relations

Of the principals who responded to the survey, 9.8% said they found community relations to be dissatisfying to them. Responses generally fit into one of two groups: the demands and expectations of the public, or the overall 'condition' of society.

Those responses which are included in the first group are from principals who were dissatisfied with the variety and number of tasks their community expected the school to perform.

"Conflicting demands and expectations of the various 'publics'" (Elementary/junior high principal).

"Societal demands that the school be responsible for all the

problems society has. Dumping all its problems on the school to fix" (Junior/senior high principal).

"Expectations of all the publics is simply greater than it is possible to accomplish. Sometimes I feel like the task is similar to nailing JELLO onto a wall" (Elementary school principal).

Responses included in the second group are from principals who seemed more dissatisfied with how the public felt about the school and their relationship to it.

"The direction society is taking in relation to family structure and attitudes toward the school. It appears as though even upper elementary children are telling their parents what to do and when to do it. More responsible parenting is needed to provide brakes to societal changes which perhaps are not in the best interest of the family and education' (Elementary school principal).

". . .lack of respect among public for work done by teachers. Feeling that teachers work nine to three, have two months holiday and are overpaid still exists" (Elementary/junior high school principal).

"The low regard the general public has for teachers. This is reflected in negative press, unwillingness to pay dollars necessary for salary, equipment, school buildings. . . ." (Elementary/junior high school principal).

School Programs

School programs were mentioned by 9.1% of the principals who

responded to the survey as leading to dissatisfaction.

Most principals listing this as a dissatisfier were concerned with inadequacies which they were unable, not unwilling to alter, regarding special needs students within their school.

> "Because of our small size, we are unable to provide the specialized help some students require" (Elementary school principal).
>
> ". . .a number of students that are special needs [students] and not having a program especially for them" (K to 12 principal).

One principal pointed out that special programs were dissatisfying to him in another way.

> "Amount of time spent dealing with Special Ed. programs and students" (Elementary school principal).

Another principal provided a very similar response but showed that program dissatisfaction is not restricted to 'traditional' special programs.

> "Working with students on Correspondence and Distance Education" (K to 12 principal).

Two principals indicated that their sense of dissatisfaction came from the public's perception and opinion of what their schools did or did not offer.

> "I work in a small school in a division with nearby, larger, K to six schools and parents have expectations of exactly [the] same program offerings in our school as compared to larger schools with larger staffs which can offer more programs because of their availability of greater numbers of teachers" (Elementary school principal).

> "Dealing with problems related to second language programs that are imposed on schools and not popular with public opinion" (Elementary school principal).

One principal indicated that he felt a sense of dissatisfaction over the apparent goals of programs which were offered to students in schools.

> "There appears to be a controversy over continuity in programming and achievement tests. On the one hand, schools are being encouraged to respond to individual student needs and yet have them prepared for achievement testing. In many cases this is difficult to do" (Elementary school principal).

Lack of Power

About 9% of the responding principals indicated that a lack of power in their position was a source of dissatisfaction to them. Generally, their dissatisfaction seems to come from three main sources.

Principals indicated that they were dissatisfied with the fact that they needed permission before they were permitted to act.

> "Inability to carry out 'change' without the permission of the local board--need permission for everything" (K to 12 principal).
>
> "The bureaucratic need to 'document' local educational decisions or plans for Central Office" (K to 12 principal).

A second source of dissatisfaction for some principals was the fact that they were often subject to decisions that they had no hand in making.

"Parents and the Board make or can politically make decisions concerning educational aspects they are ill-informed about--often even with information they make emotional decisions. Often the public in these positions are there because they have an axe to grind" (Junior/senior high principal).

"Superordinates making decisions that affect my school, staff, programs, etc. without consultation" (Elementary school principal).

A third source of dissatisfaction was the fact that even though principals may not have the power, they do have the responsibility.

"Being held accountable and yet not having resources or control of resources: the expectation that you will make it work with what you are given" (High school principal).

Student Social Problems

Social problems of their students was a source of dissatisfaction for 6.8% of the principals responding to this survey.

Principals indicated that there were two basic sources for the social problems that caused them to be concerned. One of these was the lack of motivation on the part of some students.

"A few children in each school are not motivated. These days the school must become the cure-all and end-all for many social problems. More support and counselling is needed" (Elementary school principal).

"Dealing with students who are unmotivated. Persuading them to accept ownership of their future" (Senior high school principal).

Another social problem experienced by students and causing dissatisfaction to principals was family problems.

> "Attempting to help-counsel-assist students with serious family problems-academic progress becomes so secondary because of social, self-esteem and family problems" (Elementary/junior high school principal).
>
> "Attempting to cause positive behavior change in a student when the home is characteristic of a dysfunctional family" (Junior/senior high school principal).

Stressors Reported by Principals

The principals were also asked to provide information in written form about the two most stressful aspects of their jobs. Table 4.6 lists the ten most frequently occurring responses received in order from most to least stressful. The discussion presented in this section follows the same order.

Parents

Parents were chosen by 27.5% of the responding principals as one of the two stressors which tied for most stressful.

"Irrational' and 'uncooperative' were the two terms which were used most frequently by principals when referring to parents. Most principals seemed to agree that many difficulties would be eased if parents could be more supportive and cooperate with their local school.

Table 4.6
Stressors Reported by Principals
Ten Most Frequently Mentioned
(ranked most to least stressful)

	Frequency	Percent
Parents	36	27.5
Teacher Problems	36	27.5
Workload	30	22.9
Student Problems	23	17.6
School Programs	17	13.0
Central Office	15	11.5
Lack of Time	11	8.4
Funding/Budget	11	8.4
Community Concerns	9	6.9
Board/Politics	8	6.1

Stress generated by encounters with parents came from two types of interactions. The first can be classified as 'complaining about the job being done by the principal and/or school'.

> "Parental perception from the 'less than reasonable' element that I am not and the school is not doing a good job. To try and change these thought processes is an uphill battle" (Junior/senior high school principal).
>
> "My most stressful experience comes from the attitude of certain parents. They are negative about everything and they never come to discuss things, they just complain behind your back" (Elementary/junior high principal).
>
> "It is stressful to deal with parents who blame their child's poor achievement on teachers and this school, particularly teachers and school situations of the past" (Elementary/junior high principal).

The other main source or stress associated with parents resulted from the parental attitude of 'let me tell you how to do your job.'

> "Parents and/or students who don't have the education but think that others just listen to and follow their wise advice on educational or legal matters" (K to 12 principal).
>
> "Parents who want things their way and go behind your back, talking to others when they should be talking to you" (Elementary/junior high principal).

Teacher Problems

The other stressor which was chosen most frequently was Teacher Problems. It also was chosen by 27.5% of the responding

principals.

Many principals who chose this as a stressor simply indicated 'incompetent staff' and left it at that. Those that chose to elaborate indicated that it was really having to work with that type of teacher and trying to get them to change, especially if the teacher was uncooperative, that was the cause of the stress. It was not simply handwringing over the presence of a teacher who was less than effective.

> "Dealing with problem teachers who are too defensive and not responsive to constructive criticism" (Junior/senior high school principal).
>
> "Promoting change in a teacher who is seen as inadequate by school and Central Office evaluators, the parents and the students" (Junior/senior high school principal).
>
> "Problems that are associated with professional staff who are not doing a satisfactory job. This includes attempts at improvement, supervision, parental pressure, ATA rules and regulations and any other problems associated with it" (K to 12 principal).

One principal pointed out that while it was a rare problem, having teachers who were openly unsupportive was very stressful.

> "Teachers complaining in public of what they feel are injustices, in cases, breaking some of the rules of ethics vis-a-vis other teachers or the administration" (Elementary school principal).

Workload

The amount and variety of work they were required to do was selected as a source of stress by 22.9% of the principals responding to the survey.

There were several distinct factors associated with the workload of a principal which were reported as stressful. The first of these is simply the volume of tasks set for a principal.

> "Too many people who want a piece of you flesh. People who want you to be everything for everybody all the time. . . . They want you to be on the job 24 hours a day, 365 days a year" (K to 12 school principal).
>
> "As full-time teacher and principal during some times of the year, the work load exceeds the number of hours in a day" (Elementary school principal).
>
> "The demands made by everyone on the administrator with precious little time to deal with them. Too little time to do the appropriate job" (Junior/senior high school principal).

Another stress-inducing factor associated with the workload of the principal was the amount of time they lost from their personal lives.

> "Never seem to be caught up in tasks. The job is consuming all weekends and deep into summers, Christmas and Easter breaks" (Elementary/junior high school principal).
>
> "Duties in addition to those 'normally' expected of a principal leave little time for family life" (Elementary school principal).
>
> "The volume of work and seemingly ever-increasing demands and expectations which detract from ones private life.

> Associated with this is the lack of anonymity in a small rural setting" (Junior/senior high school principal).

A third source of workload-related stress for principals came from the variety of roles they had to play, especially if those roles were 'non-traditional' or 'outside' the usual role of a principal.

> "The multiple roles that must be played--thus politicizing the principal without the necessary autonomy or independence to make it workable" (Senior high school principal).
>
> "More and more work is dumped onto the principal--mostly unnecessary paperwork. More and more 'domestic' social problems are also dumped onto the schools so that the principal has been forced into accepting the role of the social worker. While the school should be concerned about the mental/emotional health of the students, valuable time that should go towards the enhancement of education is wasted on solving some of the social problems" (Elementary school principal).

A fourth identifiable source of stress for principals was the reward they received for the work they did.

> "The demands/pressure from public, parents, Central Office, teachers, Alberta Education. Everyone wants more but time and compensation never accompanies the demands. Principals also have a life to live!" (Elementary/junior high school principal).
>
> "No coffee breaks, bathroom breaks or lunch break. Always 'on the go' from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Teacher aides are GUARANTEED, BY CONTRACT, a 30 minute lunch break. Why not

the same privilege for principals?" (Elementary/junior high school principal).

Student Problems

Student problems generally fall into one of two categories and were seen as a source of stress by 17.6% of the principals.

The most commonly identified student problem was that of the discipline problem or unmotivated student where there is little support at home for the school.

"Disciplining students when you know you are all alone (that is, no support from home or negative support from home)" (Elementary/junior high school principal).

"Students who are unmotivated with very little parental support" (Junior high school principal).

"Dealing with students who do not really want to to be in school but claim they do--poor attendance, non-performance and the parents who continuously make excuses for them" (Junior/senior high school principal).

Student problems which were family-related, rather than school-related were also seen as a source of stress to many principals.

"Problem children--the ones that fall through the Social Services cracks, the wounded children, the ones with uncle-dads, foster homes, single parents stress. . . ." (Elementary school principal).

"Trying to help students who have little support from home and who are probably living in conditions which are a disadvantage to them and whom I know want your help but as an individual I

am unable to make changes that would help them" (K to 12 principal).

"[Another] aspect I find difficult are the cases of sexual and physical abuse that we have had to deal with" (Elementary school principal).

School Programs

Principals who chose school programs as a source of stress for them constituted 13.0% of the sample. Their concerns were quite similar and fall into three general groups.

The most commonly-voiced source of stress was with regard to special needs children and can be summed up with two words;

"Inadequate programs. . . ." (Elementary school principal).

General operation of the school, specifically timetabling, was also listed as a source of stress.

"Developing and maintaining policy for the operation of the school. This includes timetabling, an ever-expanding array of courses with limited resources" (Junior/senior high school principal).

"Creating a good timetable to meet students needs in a K to 12 school" (K to 12 school principal).

A third source of stress is the number of 'social service' type of activities the school is involved in.

"Escalating cases of students in need of professional counselling and for whom we are not able to qualify for one-on-one aide time, such as physically handicapped students are" (Elementary school principal).

"Increasing demands on schools to provide more 'social service' type of programs and services" (Elementary/junior high school principal).

Central Office

Central Office was seen as a source of stress for 11.5% of the principals who responded to the survey. They identified several areas of concern but two of these areas were referred to repeatedly.

Principals said that lack of communication (or worthwhile communication, as one principal put it) and direction from their superiors was a problem.

"Communications with central office--never quite knowing where you stand" (Elementary school principal).

"Lack of open communication between administrators and central office" (Elementary school principal).

"Mis-communication or poor quality communication (sudden change of plans) by central office" (Elementary/junior high school principal).

"Trying to get the Board members to accept their responsibility for planning and direction within the [jurisdiction]" (Elementary school principal).

The second source of stress related to central office was the fact that many principals felt that they could not count on their superiors for support.

"Dealing with central office--don't count on them for any backing" (Elementary/junior high school principal).

"No back-up by Deputy Superintendent or Superintendent. Very

stressful" (Elementary/junior high school principal).

Lack of Time

Of the responding principals, 8.4% said that a 'lack of time' was a cause of stress to them. One principal wrote,

"Finding the time to get everything done" (Elementary school principal).

This sentiment was echoed by all principals in this category however, some were more specific in their concerns.

"Trying to juggle the demands for immediate feedback from parents, teachers, students and Central Office. All demand of your time but often do not recognize that you may have to finish meeting another demand before you can get to dealing with theirs" (K to 12 principal).

"No time set aside or given to deal with any conflicts or problems that arise. My class just is put 'on hold' until I return. [The] same happens when Central Office personnel come out to talk to me. Why can't they come AFTER school?" (Elementary/junior high principal).

"The number and length of administrators meetings I am required to attend" (Elementary school principal).

Funding/Budget

About 8% of responding principals indicated that matters relating to funding and/or budget were a source of stress for them. The concerns which were expressed most often fell into two similar categories.

Many principals said they found it stressful that the responsibilities of their schools were expanding while available funding was shrinking.

> "Constant demands to do more with less. For example, financial/budget constraints but always more and changing programs" (Elementary/junior high principal).
>
> "Finding enough dollars to support curriculum change and innovation" (Elementary school principal).

In the second group, concerns regarding funding and its effects on staffing were expressed.

> "Dealing with cutbacks to budget and staff that have not been planned or are deemed warranted" (Elementary school principal).
>
> "Reduction of teaching staff due to budget restraints" (Elementary school principal).
>
> "Being required to do a job while being denied the resource to do it--financial, personnel, time. . . ." (Senior high principal).

Community Concerns

Community concerns were chosen by 6.9% of responding principals as a source of stress. Responses covered a variety of topics including social 'mores'; school image; unrealistic expectations and heavy demands which are made on the school. Most often mentioned however, was 'conflict situations.'

> "Conflicting demands and expectations of various publics" (Elementary/junior high principal).
>
> "Community conflicts and family feuds which spill over into

school because of what students are exposed to at home" (Elementary school principal).

"Working with and between community cliques whose children maintain the conflicts associated with the adult cliques is very stressful because one has to be extremely delicate or both sides want to 'put the boots to the principal'" (Elementary/junior high principal).

Board/Politics

About 6% of responding principals stated that the School Board and politics were a source of stress.

One principal indicated that one of his sources of dissatisfaction was also a source of stress (quoted here for reference),

"Parents and Board members make or can politically make decisions concerning educational aspects they are ill-informed about. Often even with information they make emotional decisions. Often the public in these positions are there because they have an axe to grind" (Junior/senior high principal).

To this he added a single but important sentence.

"Try and keep good staff with all the politics and bureaucracy."

Many principals stated that a lack of understanding on the part of the Board was stressful.

"Board Meetings--lack of understanding on their part. . . .inability to learn" (Elementary school principal).

"Dealing with the 'politics' of the local school board" (K to 12

school principal).

"Politics of the county system--perceived lack of support/understanding by county councillors" (Junior high principal).

One principal explained specifically that politics has shifted power out of the school and directly affects educational decision-making.

"Having to look over your shoulder every time you say something or do something. You do or you don't do things because you are worried about what the reaction would be of the parents. Too much power has been given to the parents and has at times rendered the principal a politician trying to please them. The principal should be more concerned about the day-to-day running of the school and educational issues" (Elementary school principal).

Conclusion

This chapter contains the analysis of the sources and degrees of dissatisfaction and stress for the entire population of rural school principals in this study. The data were obtained in two ways, and analyzed separately as indicated in this summary.

When asked to identify sources of dissatisfaction from a pre-determined list, principals generally indicated that the amount of work they had to do and the time it took to do that work, along with the rewards and recognition they received (or did not receive) for their work were major sources of dissatisfaction. Conditions in the workplace and conditions associated with their appointment to the

position of principal were also rated high as sources of dissatisfaction. Given the opportunity to identify their sources of dissatisfaction without the restriction of a pre-determined list, principals still indicated that workload and insufficient time were the main sources of their dissatisfaction. However, people-related problems including those associated with students, staff and parents eclipsed concerns related to reward and recognition and figured prominently as sources of dissatisfaction.

When asked to identify sources of stress from a pre-determined list, workload and time figured prominently. Concerns with school programs and concerns related to problems with students and staff were also chosen as significant sources of stress. Given the opportunity to identify their sources of stress without the restriction of a pre-determined list, Parents and Teacher Problems were listed as the number one contributors to stress. Workload and Student Problems were still listed but they were joined by several outside-the-school factors as sources of stress. Specifically these were Central Office, Funding, Community and the School Board.

CHAPTER V

SURVEY RESULTS: SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

The responses of the 146 participating principals were further analyzed to investigate the possibility that certain variables or characteristics associated with principals or their schools may contribute to the creation of dissatisfaction or stress. Seven characteristics including the size of the school; the distance of the school from town; the distance of the school from Central Office, the teaching assignments of administrators; the type of jurisdiction involved; the configuration of the school and the amount of administrative experience each principal had, were investigated.

Significant findings of the relationship between dissatisfaction and stress with each of the seven characteristics are presented in this chapter.

Size of School

Each of the 146 questionnaires was placed into a sub-group based on the size of the school from which it was received. Small schools were those with eight or fewer FTE of staff. Medium-sized schools were those with more than eight but as many as 17 FTE of staff while large schools were those with more than 17 FTE of staff.

Dissatisfiers

Table 5.1 shows that there was a significant difference

Table 5.1
Comparison of Dissatisfiers
Between Small, Medium and Large Schools

Variable	Schools			Significantly Different
	Small N=46	Medium N=44	Large N=56	
Job Security	3.06	3.68	3.82	1:2,3
Amount of Work	1.84	2.36	2.49	1:3
Extra Tasks	1.93	2.52	2.54	1:3
Involvement in Important Decisions	3.13	3.38	3.66	1:3
Status in Community	3.04	3.56	3.55	1:2,3
Recognition For Your Work	2.67	2.95	3.30	1:3
Intellectual Stimulation	2.84	3.56	3.37	1:2,3

Key: # 1 Small School--eight or fewer FTE of staff
2 Medium School--from nine to 17 FTE of staff
3 Large School--18 or more FTE of staff

Numerical Scale--higher values indicate greater satisfaction

between at least two of the groups for seven of the dissatisfiers. There was no difference between the groups for the remaining 19 possible dissatisfiers.

For each of the seven dissatisfiers for which there was a difference between the groups, principals of smaller schools were most dissatisfied. Dissatisfaction associated with smaller schools seemed to revolve around the amount of work involved and the status associated with the job.

Principals of small schools (eight or fewer FTE) were more dissatisfied than the principals of large schools on four issues: Amount of Work, Extra Tasks, Involvement in Important Decisions and Recognition For Your Work, and more dissatisfied than principals of both medium-sized and large schools regarding Job Security, Status in the Community and Intellectual Stimulation.

Stressors

Table 5.2 shows that there was a significant difference between at least two of the groups for seven of the 23 possible stressors. There was no significant difference for the remaining 16 stressors.

For two of the stressors, Heavy Workload and Lack of Time, principals of small schools experienced more stress than principals of both medium-sized and large schools. Principals of small schools reported more stress than principals of large schools for three stressors: Accommodating To Curriculum Change, Volume Of Student Evaluation Activities and Conflict Situations and more stess

Table 5.2
Comparison of Stressors
Between Small, Medium and Large Schools

Variable	Schools			Significantly Different
	Small N=46	Medium N=44	Large N=56	
Accommodating Curriculum Change	2.73	2.36	2.10	1:3
Volume of Student Eval. Activities	2.54	2.13	1.94	1:3
Heavy Workload	3.52	2.77	2.83	1:2,3
Lack of Time	3.34	2.56	2.73	1:2,3
Student Marks To Evaluate Teachers	2.40	1.60	2.33	1:2
Conflict Situations	3.23	2.69	2.60	1:3
Problem Teachers	2.04	2.79	3.16	1:2,3

Key: # 1 Small School--eight or fewer FTE of staff
2 Medium School--from nine to 17 FTE of staff
3 Large School--18 or more FTE of staff

Numerical Scale--higher values indicate greater stress

than principals of medium-sized schools for one stressor: Student Marks Used To Evaluate Teachers.

Only in association with Problem Teachers did the principals of small schools feel less stress than their counterparts in other schools.

Type of Jurisdiction

The responses from the 146 participating administrators were separated into three sub-groups representing counties, school divisions and 'other' jurisdictions.

Dissatisfiers

There were no significant differences between principals grouped by type of jurisdiction with regard to any of the possible dissatisfiers.

Stressors

Table 5.3 shows that there were significant differences between at least two of the sub-groups in relation to five of the possible stressors.

With regard to four of the stressors: Lack of Time, Curriculum Changes Made Before Materials Are Ready, Conflict Situations and Rapid Curriculum Change, principals of schools in counties experienced more stress than did principals in other schools. With regard to the Use Of Student Marks To Evaluate Teachers, principals

Table 5.3
Comparison of Stressors
Based on Type of Jurisdiction

Variable	Jurisdictions			Significantly Different
	County N=58	Division N=75	Other N=13	
Lack of Time	3.08	2.85	2.07	1:3
Curriculum Changes Before Material Ready	3.12	2.86	2.15	1:3
Student Marks To Evaluate Teachers	2.55	1.83	1.92	1:2
Conflict Situations	3.13	2.70	2.16	1:3
Rapid Curr. Change	2.59	2.32	1.69	1:3

Key: #1 County
#2 Division
#3 Other

Numerical Scale--higher values indicate greater stress

of schools in counties experienced more stress than did principals of division schools.

Configuration of Schools

The responses of the 146 administrators were separated into four sub-groups based on the type of school in which they were employed. The four groups included schools which served kindergarten through grade six; kindergarten through grade nine; kindergarten through grade twelve; and grades seven through twelve.

Dissatisfiers

Table 5.4 shows that there was only a single dissatisfier, Advancement Opportunities, for which there was a significant difference amongst administrators catagorized by configuration of schools. Principals of schools offering kindergarten through grade twelve were less dissatisfied with their perceived opportunity for advancement.

Stressors

Table 5.5 shows that there were three possible stressors for which there was a significant difference amongst principals of different types of schools.

With regard to the Placement of Special Needs Students, principals of kindergarten to grade twelve schools indicated that they felt significantly more stress than their counterparts in elementary or elementary/junior high schools.

Table 5.4
Comparison of Dissatisfiers
Based on School Configuration

	School Configuration				
Variable	#1 N=54	#2 N=38	#3 N=21	#4 N=32	Significantly Different
Advancement Opportunities	2.75	2.43	3.27	2.21	3:4

Key: # 1 Kindergarten to grade six
2 Kindergarten to grade nine
3 Kindergarten to grade twelve
4 Junior/Senior High

Numerical Scale--higher values indicate greater satisfaction

Table 5.5
Comparison of Stressors
Based on School Configuration

	School Configuration				
Variable	#1 N=54	#2 N=38	#3 N=21	#4 N=32	Significantly Different
Placement of Special Needs Students	2.31	2.34	3.22	2.51	3:1,2
Problem Teachers	2.39	2.37	2.95	3.40	4:1,2
Timetable Construction	1.42	1.92	2.22	2.31	4:1

Key: # 1 Kindergarten to grade six
2 Kindergarten to grade nine
3 Kindergarten to grade twelve
4 Junior/Senior High

Numerical Scale--higher values indicate greater stress

Administrators of junior/senior high schools were found to experience significantly more stress from Problem Teachers than administrators in elementary or elementary/junior high schools.

Construction of a Workable Timetable was significantly more stressful for principals of junior/senior high schools than for principals of elementary schools.

Distance from Town

The responses from participating administrators were separated into sub-groups depending on the distance from the school to the nearest town of at least 2 000 people. Sub-groups identified included schools less than 10 km from town; schools between 11 and 30 km from town; schools between 31 and 50 km from town; schools between 51 and 100 km from town; and those schools more than 100 km from town.

Dissatisfiers

There were no significant differences between principals catagorized by distance from the nearest town with regard to possible dissatisfiers.

Stressors

There was a significant difference amongst administrators for one of the possible stressors.

Table 5.6 shows that principals of schools less than 10 km from town felt more stress from Problem Teachers than was

Table 5.6

Comparison of Stressors
Based on the School's Distance from Town

Variable	Distance from Town #1 N=43	#2 N=23	#3 N=28	#4 N=30	#5 N=16	Significantly Different
Problem Teachers	3.45	2.26	2.41	2.40	2.29	1:2,4

Key: # 1 Less than 10 km
2 From 11 to 30 km
3 From 31 to 50 km
4 From 51 to 100 km
5 More than 100 km

Numerical Scale--higher values indicate greater stress

experienced by principals of schools that were either 11 to 30 km or 51 to 100 km from town.

Distance to Central Office

The sample of 146 responses was divided into sub-groups based on the distance from the school to Central Office. The four groups consisted of schools less than 2 km from Central Office; schools between 2 and 25 km from Central Office; schools between 26 and 50 km from Central Office; and schools more than 50 km from Central Office.

Dissatisfiers

Table 5.7 shows that principals of schools less than 2 km from Central Office felt less dissatisfied with their Status In The Community and with the Intellectual Stimulation available on the job than did principals of schools more than 50 km from the Central Office.

Stressors

Table 5.8 shows that principals of schools between 2 and 25 km from Central Office felt significantly less stress regarding the placement of special needs students than did principals of schools farther away.

Table 5.7

Comparison of Dissatisfiers
Based on School's Distance from Central Office

	School's Distance from Central Office				
Variable	#1 N=34	#2 N=27	#3 N=39	#4 N=45	Significantly Different
Status in Community	3.82	3.25	3.41	3.15	1:4
Intellectual Stimulation	3.61	3.33	3.28	2.89	1:4

Key: # 1 Less than 2 km
2 From 2 to 25 km
3 From 26 to 50 km
4 More than 50 km

Numerical Scale--higher values mean more satisfaction

Table 5.8

Comparison of Stressors
Based on School's Distance from Central Office

	School's Distance from Central Office				
Variable	#1 N=34	#2 N=27	#3 N=39	#4 N=45	Significantly Different
Placement of Special Needs Students	2.44	1.77	2.71	2.80	2:3,4

Key: # 1 Less than 2 km
2 From 2 to 25 km
3 From 26 to 50 km
4 More than 50 km

Numerical Scale--higher values indicate greater stress

Teaching Assignment of Administrator

The total sample was divided into two sub-groups: administrators with teaching assignments and administrators without teaching assignments.

Dissatisfiers

Data in table 5.9 indicate that there was a significant difference between the two groups based on teaching assignment for two of the possible dissatisfiers.

Administrators with teaching assignments were more dissatisfied with the Amount Of Work required and with the Extra Tasks associated with their jobs.

Stressors

Data in table 5.10 indicate that there was a significant difference between the two sub-groups with regard to four of the possible stressors. Administrators who were not teaching felt more stress from over-sized classes than did administrators with teaching assignments.

Teaching administrators indicated they felt more stress than their non-teaching counterparts due to Heavy Workloads, a Lack Of Time and having to Accommodate To Curriculum Change.

Experience of Administrator

The sample of 146 responses was divided into sub-groups

Table 5.9
Comparison of Dissatisfiers
Based on Administrator's Teaching Assignment

Variables	Administrator's Teaching Assignment: Teaching N=112	Non-Teaching N=33
Amount of Work	2.09	2.75
Exta Tasks	2.20	2.84

Numerical Scale--higher values indicate greater satisfaction

Table 5.10
Comparison of Stressors
Based on Administrator's Teaching Assignment

Variables	Administrator's Teaching Assignment: Teaching N=112	Non-Teaching N=33
Over-sized Classes	1.49	2.12
Accommodating Curriculum Change	2.49	2.00
Heavy Workload	3.18	2.54
Lack of Time	3.03	2.33

Numerical Scale--higher values indicate greater stress

based on the years of experience as a principal each administrator had. The sub-groups included principals with two or fewer years of experience; principals with three to five years of experience; principals with six to ten years of experience; principals with 11 to 15 years of experience; and principals with 16 or more years of experience.

Dissatisfiers

There were no significant differences between any of the sub-groups as catagorized by years of experience for any of the possible dissatisfiers.

Stressors

Table 5.11 shows that there was a significant difference between two of the sub-groups with regard to problem teachers. Administrators with between three and five years of experience indicated that they had less stress due to problem teachers than did administrators with between 11 and 15 years of experience.

Conclusion

This chapter contains a summary of the relationships found between a variety of background factors and dissatisfaction and stress. The selected background factors of schools and principals were generally not significantly related to either dissatisfaction or stress. However, some exceptions to this were found.

Table 5.11
Comparison of Stressors
Based on Years of Administrator's Experience

	Years of Administrator's Experience				
	#1	#2	#3*	#4*	#5
Variables	N=26	N=22	N=37	N=27	N=33
Problem Teachers	2.34	2.04	2.51	3.48	3.06

Key: #1 Less than two years administrative experience
#2 From three to five years administrative experience
#3 From six to ten years administrative experience
#4 From 11 to 15 years administrative experience
#5 More than 15 years administrative experience

Numerical Key--higher values indicate greater stress

* The only significant difference was between groups 3 and 4.

Principals of small schools experienced more dissatisfaction and more stress than did principals of medium-sized and large schools. Principals employed by counties experienced greater stress than principals employed by other school jurisdictions. Stress appeared to be related to whether or not the principal had a teaching assignment.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter is divided into three sections providing a brief summary of the study. The first includes the purpose of the study, a re-statement of the problems, the instrumentation, the research methodology and sample. The second section contains a review of major findings. Conclusions drawn from the findings and implications are discussed in the third section.

Summary

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the work experience of school principals in non-urban areas of northern Alberta. Its goal was to determine the dissatisfiers and stressors of these principals as a group; and to see if specific dissatisfiers and stressors varied with certain characteristics associated with schools and principals in northern Alberta.

Problems

The study examined the following problems:

1. What aspects of their work were viewed by principals of schools in northern Alberta as their major dissatisfiers?
2. What experiences of principals of schools in northern Alberta were viewed as major stressors?

3. What aspects of their work do principals in northern Alberta identify as their major sources of dissatisfaction?
4. What experiences of principals of schools in northern Alberta were viewed as major sources of stress?
5. How are the dissatisfiers and stressors identified by principals in northern Alberta schools related to selected characteristics of schools and principals?

Problem 5 was divided into the following sub-problems:

5.1 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the size of the school they worked in?

5.2 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the size of the school they worked in?

5.3 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and type of jurisdiction they were employed by?

5.4 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and type of jurisdiction they were employed by?

5.5 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the configuration of the school they worked in?

5.6 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the configuration of the school they worked in?

5.7 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the distance of the school from town?

5.8 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the distance of the school from town?

5.9 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the distance of the school from Central Office?

5.10 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the distance of the school from Central Office?

5.11 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the teaching assignment of the principal?

5.12 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the teaching assignment of the principal?

5.13 What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the level of experience of the principal?

5.14 What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the level of experience of the principal?

Instrumentation and Methodology

Data were collected by means of a questionnaire prepared

especially for this study. Each questionnaire was made up of 64 questions separated into four distinct sections. Many of the questions were similar to those used by Friesen and Sarros, items were added to tailor the questionnaire to the study. In hopes that a quick-to-answer survey would bring more complete results, 62 of the 64 questions required a forced-choice response.

Sample

The questionnaires were sent to 202 principals in northern Alberta. Excluded from this study were principals of schools in St. Albert, Sturgeon School Division, Grande Prairie, Peace River and Fort McMurray, because they were viewed as urban. Of the 202 principals who were surveyed, 146 returned completed questionnaires, giving a response rate of 72.3%.

Review of Major Findings

This section summarizes the major findings as they apply to each of the problems or sub-problems.

Problem 1

"What aspects of their work were viewed by principals of schools in northern Alberta as their major dissatisfiers?"

Principals were given a list of 26 possible dissatisfiers and asked to rank each one as to how dissatisfying they felt it to be. Principals indicated that the amount of work they had to do and the time it took to do that work, along with the rewards and recognition

they received (or did not receive) for their work were major sources of dissatisfaction. Conditions in the workplace and conditions associated with their appointment to the position of principal were also mentioned.

Problem 2

"What experiences of principals of schools in northern Alberta were viewed as major stressors?"

Principals were given a list of 23 possible stressors and asked to rank each one as to how stressful they felt it to be.

The amount of work that was required and the lack of time in which to do it figured prominently as sources of stress. Concerns regarding school programs and people-related concerns, especially problems with staff and students, were also chosen frequently.

Problem 3

"What aspects of their work did principals in northern Alberta identify as their major sources of dissatisfaction?"

When principals were asked to identify freely those situations or conditions from their experience which caused them dissatisfaction, they still indicated that workload and insufficient time were amongst their most serious concerns. However, people-related problems including those associated with students, staff and parents eclipsed concerns related to rewards and recognition to figure prominently as sources of dissatisfaction.

Problem 4

"What experiences did principals in northern Alberta identify as their major sources of stress?"

When principals were asked to identify freely those situations or conditions from their experience which caused them stress, Parents were mentioned as the number one source. Workload and concerns with staff or student problems were still listed but they were joined by several outside-the-school factors. Specifically, Central Office, Funding, Community and the Board were all listed as sources of stress.

Problem 5

"How were the dissatisfiers and stressors identifed by principals in northern Alberta related to selected characteristics of schools and principals?"

This problem was divided into a number of sub-problems to facilitate analysis.

Sub-Problem 5.1

"What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the size of the school they worked in?"

Principals of small schools (eight or fewer FTE of staff) were only moderately satisfied with the Amount of Work and the Extra Tasks they had to perform. They were significantly less satisfied than were the principals of large schools. Small school principals were also less satisfied than large school principals with regard to

Involvement In Important Decisions and the Recognition They Received For Their Work.

Principals of small schools were significantly less satisfied than principals of both medium and large schools in the areas of Job Security, Status In The Community, and Intellectual Stimulation.

Sub-Problem 5.2

"What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the size of the school they worked in?"

Accommodating To Curriculum Change, the Volume Of Student Evaluation Activities and Conflict Situation were all moderately or considerably stressful for the principals of small schools and in each case they felt more stress in these areas than did the principals of large schools.

Principals of small schools said they felt moderate to considerable stress from the use of Student Marks To Evaluate Teachers. This was significantly more stress than was indicated by the principals of medium schools.

Heavy Workload and Lack Of Time caused "considerably to very" stressful conditions for principals of small schools, significantly more than for principals of medium or large schools.

Principals of small schools indicated that they felt only moderate stress from Problem Teachers and this was significantly less than the stress experienced by the principals of either medium or large schools.

Sub-Problem 5.3

"What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the type of jurisdiction they were employed with?"

There were no significant differences among principals employed by counties, school divisions or other types of jurisdictions with regard to any of the possible dissatisfiers.

Sub-Problem 5.4

"What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the type of jurisdiction they were employed with?"

Principals of schools in counties indicated that they felt moderate or considerable stress due to Lack Of Time; Curriculum Changes Before Material Is Ready; Conflict Situations and Rapid Curriculum Change. In each case, their level of stress was significantly higher than it was for those principals who indicated their jurisdiction type was other than county.

County principals said they felt moderate to considerable stress due to Student Marks Being Used To Evaluate Teachers and in this they felt more stress than did principals in Divisions.

Sub-Problem 5.5

"What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the configuration of the school they worked in?"

Differences were found with regard to only one dissatisfier. Principals of schools serving kindergarten through grade twelve felt the least dissatisfaction with their Advancement Opportunities, significantly less than did principals of Junior/Senior high schools.

Sub-Problem 5.6

"What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the configuration of the school they worked in?"

Principals of kindergarten to grade twelve schools indicated that they felt considerable stress due to Placement Of Special Needs Students, significantly more than principals of either kindergarten to grade six or kindergarten to grade nine schools.

Principals of Junior/Senior high schools said they felt considerable stress due to Problem Teachers. This was significantly more than was indicated by principals of either kindergarten to grade six or kindergarten to grade nine schools.

Construction Of A Workable Timetable was only mildly stressful for principals of kindergarten to grade six schools. In this regard they felt considerably less stress than principals of Junior/Senior high schools.

Sub-Problem 5.7

"What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the distance of the school from town?"

There were no significant differences on possible dissatisfiers between the sub-groups based on the distance of the school from town.

Sub-Problem 5.8

"What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the distance of the school from town?"

Principals of schools less than 10 km from the nearest town indicated that they felt Problem Teachers were considerably or very stressful. This was significantly more stress than indicated by principals of schools farther from town.

Sub-Problem 5.9

"What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the distance of the school from Central Office?"

Principals whose schools were less than 2 km from Central Office were considerably or very satisfied with both their Status In The Community and Intellectual Stimulation. Principals of schools more than 50 km from Central Office were significantly less satisfied in these two areas.

Sub-Problem 5.10

"What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the distance of the school from Central Office?"

Principals of schools which were between 2 and 25 km from Central Office said that they experienced only moderate stress from Placement Of Special Needs Students. Principals of schools farther than 25 km from Central Office experienced significantly more stress from this stressor.

Sub-Problem 5.11

"What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the teaching assignment of the principal?"

Differences were found on only two of the possible dissatisfiers when the teaching assignment of the principal was considered. Principals with teaching assignments reported significantly more dissatisfaction with regard to Amount Of Work and Extra Tasks.

Sub-Problem 5.12

"What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the teaching assignment of the principal?"

Principal who taught felt moderate to considerable stress from Accommodating To Curriculum Change; Heavy Workload; and Lack Of Time. This was significantly more stress than was reported for these stressors by non-teaching principals.

Non-teaching principals reported that they experienced moderate stress due to Over-Sized Classes. Teaching principals indicated that they felt only mild stress in this case.

Sub-Problem 5.13

"What relationship existed between the dissatisfiers identified by principals and the level of experience of the principal?"

There were no significant differences between the sub-groups with regard to possible dissatisfiers when principals were grouped according to their years of experience.

Sub-Problem 5.14

"What relationship existed between the stressors identified by principals and the level of experience of the principal?"

Years of administrative experience was significantly related to only one of the twenty-three identified stressors.

Those principals with three to five years of administrative experience indicated only moderate stress from Problem Teachers while those principals with eleven to fifteen years of administrative experience said Problem Teachers were considerably or very stressful. On the whole though, administrative experience was not significantly related to the identified stressors.

Conclusions

This section presents the conclusions derived from the research.

School principals in northern Alberta are exposed to a variety of situations, people, circumstances and conditions that may be sources of dissatisfaction or stress. While these sources of

dissatisfaction and stress were identifiable, they did not affect all principals equally. A careful examination of the data obtained in this study did allow some conclusions to be drawn.

Demographics

Most of the principals were male (78.2%), under the age of forty-five years (63.9%), and had between 11 and 25 years of teaching experience (74.0%). Generally they had 10 or fewer years of experience as an administrator (58.2%) and had been in the school for five or fewer years (67.1%). Most principals (78.1%) taught (76.7% had regular teaching assignments) in schools that offered kindergarten and some combination of grades up to and including grade twelve.

Most of the schools were fewer than 50 km from town (64.2%) but more than 25 km from Central Office (58.2%). Just over 50% of them were located in school divisions.

Over half the principals (57.5%) said that in general they found their job Moderately or Considerably stressful, but only 11.6% found their job to be Very or Extremely stressful.

Conclusions: Total Sample

Dissatisfaction

Time and Workload were seen as the major sources of dissatisfaction for principals in northern Alberta. The principals also indicated dissatisfaction with the rewards and benefits received for the time and effort they invested in their jobs.

Specifically these included Praise Received For Doing A Good Job, Advancement Opportunities, Fringe Benefits, Methods Used in Promotion, Recognition By Others For Your Work and Salary.

When asked to describe situations from their daily experience which they found to be dissatisfying, Time and Workload were still the most prominent dissatisfiers. Interestingly, however, benefits and rewards were not described as daily concerns after Time and Workload. This position was occupied by people-related concerns. These people-related concerns covered a wide variety of people and situations including Staff Concerns, Parents, Student Discipline Problems, Student Social Problems and Community Relations. This would seem to indicate that while a perceived lack of benefits from the job was dissatisfying, it was part of the 'big picture' and not a daily concern. On the other hand, the people that the administrator had to deal with were daily causes for dissatisfaction.

Stress

Lack of Time and Heavy Workload were viewed as sources of stress for principals. Other situations which figured highly as sources of stress involved people directly. These included Unmotivated Students, Conflict Situations, Problem Teachers, Disruptive Students and Burned-out Staff. All of these people-related situations present the principal a situation which require some form of resolution. Circumstances may cause a situation to become confrontational or to develop in an unforeseen manner requiring further action. The situation may, on the other hand, be resolved quickly and easily. Whichever the case, the principal is in a

situation where more than one variable may be involved and administrative control and action may be less certain.

Principals also indicated that problems with school programs were sources of stress. Specifically they indicated that they found it stressful when they were required to implement programs without having proper materials on hand and when they did not have adequate programs available for special needs students.

When asked to describe, from their daily experience, situations which they found to be sources of stress, principals indicated many of the same answers they had given on the checklist. Lack of Time and Workload were prominent stressors as were a number of people-related situations. It is worth noting, however, that a new entry, Parents, was listed as most stressful.

A number of outside-the-school factors were also described as being sources of stress. These included Community Concerns, Funding and Budget, the Board and Politics, and Central Office.

Conclusions: Selected Characteristics

Further analysis of the data from this study showed differences in the dissatisfiers and stressors experienced by principals in northern Alberta when catagorized by certain selected variables. These are detailed on the following pages.

Size of School

Dissatisfaction

Principals of small schools were more dissatisfied with certain aspects of their jobs than were their counter-parts in larger schools. Small-school principals were more dissatisfied with the size of their workload and with the perceived lack of recognition for doing the job.

They were also more dissatisfied with their involvement in making important decisions and their status in the community. It may have been that principals of small schools felt that small schools were less important than larger schools, therefore they themselves were also less important or less a factor in their school division or in their community.

Stress

Principals of small schools claimed to experience significantly more stress than did principals in larger schools with regard to a variety of factors. These included Workload, Time, Curriculum Change, Student Evaluation Activities, Conflict Situations and the Use of Student Marks To Evaluate Teachers.

Principals of small schools did indicate that they felt significantly less stress due to Problem Teachers. Perhaps small size promotes improved communication and hence improved understanding.

Configuration of Schools

Dissatisfaction

Principals of schools serving kindergarten to grade twelve felt significantly less dissatisfaction with their opportunity for advancement than did principals of junior/senior high schools. It is likely that having experience with all levels of the education system makes a principal better equipped to move to another position. Principals whose experience is restricted to a narrow spectrum of grades may be less likely to be considered for a position at a different level. This could restrict the opportunities they have to move and therefore lead to a reduced sense of satisfaction.

Stress

Principals of K to 12 schools indicated a significantly high level of stress from attempting to place special needs students than principals of K to six or K to nine schools. From the point of view of an administrator, a K to twelve school would also offer the widest range of roles to fill, the greatest variety of social interactions and the broadest range of possible problem situations. It may be that the special needs students are "one more issue" that must be dealt with by an already busy principal.

Principals of K to twelve schools indicated significantly more stress from problem teachers than principals at the K to six or K to nine level. Without specific knowledge of what constitutes a "problem teacher," conclusions about this point might easily be disputed. Since, however, the stress related to problem teachers

does vary with the configuration of the school, one must assume some variable characteristic of schools occurs at the seven to twelve level that does not occur or occurs less frequently or severely in other types of schools. It could be the type or volume of student evaluation activities, curriculum content or sheer volume of material included in the curriculum. Perhaps the nature of the students, their behavior, their expectations or their requirements change and these changes adversely affect staff. It is interesting to note that stress from Problem Teachers was lowest in schools serving only the lowest grades and was highest in schools where the lower six grades were absent.

Principals of junior/senior high schools indicated that they felt more stress with regard to timetable construction than did K to six principals. This is to be expected given the wide variety of courses available to students in upper grades and the corresponding specialization of teaching staff.

Type of Jurisdiction

Dissatisfaction

The type of jurisdiction was not significantly related to the dissatisfaction experienced by administrators.

Stress

Principals in counties indicated that they were more stressed in at least five areas than principals in other types of jurisdictions. These sources of stress were Lack Of Time, Curriculum Changes

Before Material Is Ready, Student Marks Used To Evaluate Teachers, Conflict Situations and Rapid Curriculum Change.

In school divisions and separate school districts, the school board has little to do that does not relate to the operation of the local school system. However, in a county, running the school is simply one aspect of the county administration. It may be that less time is given to understanding the needs of the schools or the demands that are being made on them.

Comments from administrators would tend to support this point of view. County school principals wrote that they ". . .can't trust the Board," ". . .don't count on them [the Board] for anything," and "they [the Board] don't understand the situation in the school."

School's Distance From Town

Dissatisfaction

The distance of the school from town was not significantly related to the dissatisfaction of principals.

Stress

Administrators in schools which were less than 10 km from town indicated a significantly higher level of stress as a result of problem teachers.

School's Distance From Central Office

Dissatisfaction

Principals of schools located more than 50 km from Central Office reported significantly more dissatisfaction with regard to Status In The Community and Intellectual Stimulation than did principals of schools within 2 km of Central Office.

The closer an administrator works to Central Office, the easier it is for him or her to travel there. They would be seen there more often, become more familiar to Central Office staff and have more contact with superordinates. By comparison, the principal of a more remote school would be seen at Central Office less often, be less well known to the staff there and spend less time with superordinates. The perception may be (even to principals) that the administrators further from Central Office are further from the top of the hierarchical organization of their county or division, hence their dissatisfacction with their status.

The difference in Intellectual Stimulation may be explained in the same manner. The administrators of both schools receive much the same day-to-day work. It may then be that more satisfying intellectual stimulation may be provided through direct contact with Central Office. Frequent trips to Central Office may allow an administrator to be exposed to a wider variety of stimulus. It may not all pertain to that administrator or their school but he or she has a chance to be aware of it, discuss it and comment on it informally. More time spent near or at Central Office would also

allow a principal to meet and interact with more people of similar education and experience.

Stress

Principals of schools between 2 and 25 km from Central Office indicated they felt less stress from the placement of special needs students.

Teaching Assignment Of Administrator

Dissatisfaction

Teaching administrators indicated significantly more dissatisfaction with regard to Amount Of Work and Extra Tasks than did non-teaching administrators. Non-teaching administrators had more time available for work and any extra tasks which may come their way.

Stress

Teaching administrators felt significantly more stress than non-teaching administrators in three areas: Accommodating To Curriculum Change, Heavy Workload and Lack Of Time. The teaching administrator has less available time to devote to presenting a new course of study as well as deal with all of the day to day tasks.

Significantly, Over-Sized Classes were not as great a source of stress for teaching principals as it was for non-teaching principals. There are at least two possible reasons for this: principals who teach are in the same situation as their staff and are

not open to stress-inducing complaints or, teaching principals are in a position to be constantly reminded of the effects of over-sized classes. As a result, they tend to keep class size as low as possible.

Accommodating To Curriculum Change caused more stress to teaching administrators than non-teaching administrators. The extra stress that is felt in this case may be due to the fact that the teaching administrator must make the extra effort to implement curriculum change in the classroom.

Heavy Workload and Lack Of Time were also sources of greater stress for teaching principals. They must carry out all normal administrative duties, all the 'extra' tasks associated with the position as well as carry out their share of the instructional program.

Experience

Dissatisfaction

There were no significant differences on any of the dissatisfiers between principals categorized by their years of experience.

Stress

Principals with 11 to 15 years of experience indicated that they felt significantly greater stress from Problem Teachers than did principals with three to five years of experience. For all the

other stressors no significant differences were found between administrators based on years of experience.

Implications

1. Parents were listed as the number one source of stress for principals who participated in this study. Bearing in mind that parents as a group are the largest population that the school system must deal with, it can be taken as an indicator of problems when principals write,

> "Parents and the Board make or can politically make decisions concerning educational aspects they are ill-informed about--often even with information they make emotional decisions.
>
> Often the public in these positions are there because they have an axe to grind" (Junior/senior high school principal).
>
> "Parents who want things their way and go behind your back talking to others when they should be talking to you!" (Kindergarten to grade eight principal).

It would seem logical that steps be taken to change situations which lead to these types of comments.

2. School boards and Central Office should take a close look at how they deal with their administrators and what they expect of them. Principals who chose to comment said things like "can't trust the Board," and "don't expect any help from Central Office." This adversarial type of situation can only impede the operation of the

school district. The performance of the principal as a school administrator may be enhanced if trust and cooperation govern the relationships between principals, school boards and Central Office.

3. School boards and Central Offices should examine what and how much they are asking the principals of small schools to do. Jordan and Rowntree (1979), in explaining Walter Christaller's Central Place Theory, state that "some central places are small and offer a limited variety of goods and services; others are large and offer an abundance" (p. 373). In this case, Jordan and Rowntree were referring to towns as central places where business is transacted. Schools, with their own, smaller societies and transactions in the field of education, can easily be considered as centres, much in the way that towns are. If schools are considered as central places, then perhaps small schools ought to be limited to offering a basic education, much in the way that a small town is limited in the services it provides.

The Northern Alberta Development Council's 1985 Inventory of Infrastructure for Northern Alberta Communities provides more than enough evidence that small population centres have schools available to them. Many of these towns, however, even though they have a school, do not have the population to support what most people would consider basic services. Health Services, Banking and even Police Protection are often not available, yet schools are. This supports the idea presented earlier that schools are low threshold places which require only a small population to support them.

When the residents of smaller population centres wish to take advantage of services beyond the scope of their town (a higher

threshold service), they understand that they will have to travel to a centre where the service is available.

Small schools do not serve an adequate population to meet the threshold for special courses. Total funds available to small schools are less than in larger schools where a larger budget allows some flexibility. Buildings are smaller and the range of available equipment is reduced. Instructional staff find themselves teaching a wide variety of subjects, a situation which calls for generalization rather than specialization, often to classes containing two or three grade levels. Indeed, some small schools must cycle courses, not even offering the complete range of basic courses every year. Attempting to offer specialized education in small schools creates extra work for an administrator and the teachers and may result in a less effective program being offered.

School programs beyond the basic level have a higher threshold; a greater population is required to offer education effectively beyond the basic level. People wishing to use these specialized services (anything beyond basic education) have to accept the fact that these services have to have a greater range (they must draw students from a larger area, much in the way that a heart surgeon must draw patients from a larger area) in order to have enough population to support their programs. As a result, users of specialized services have to accept some travel.

Special programs should be offered in larger schools where administrators have more time and resources available to them. The administrators of small schools would then be able to concentrate their more limited time and resources on a more limited

program. This may reduce the dissatisfaction and stress felt by these administrators and should result in a higher quality basic education.

4. Central Office should ensure that teaching principals receive some consideration in terms of what they are asked to do and the timelines they are asked to follow. If they are expected to carry a full load as an administrator, then some allotment of time must be made. Perhaps a substitute teacher one day per week (in addition to already designated administrative time) to allow the principal to "catch up" would be an economically acceptable solution.

5. Boards and Central Office should investigate the possibility of providing extra recognition to small-school principals. This need not be in the form of money. Rather, small-school principals seem to suffer from an image problem and are dissatisfied with the status and the recognition they receive. Two problems may exist here. One problem may be that many people seem to have a poor concept of the job of principal. They feel that being the principal of a small school is easy: fewer students, fewer problems, less work. The perception seems to be that being the principal in a large school is more important than being principal in a small school. Second, the principal of a small school is likely to be much closer to the community simply because there is less area to cover and fewer people to know. As a result he or she may be seen as just part of the group, without any particular status. Steps taken to reduce these sources of dissatisfaction could include increased consultation with the administrators of small schools, recognition of their efforts and hard work in the community in which they teach or

initiatives by the Board and Central Office to re-enforce to the community the importance of the school, and hence the importance of the administrator and teachers. Measures such as these may result in happier, more satisfied and more productive administrators.

6. Schools which are remote from Central Office are prone to having administrators who suffer from status problems. Steps similar to those outlined above could help here also.

7. When considering methods for enhancing the education and knowledge of staff and thereby enhance jurisdictional performance, central office administrators should bear in mind the work of Bolam (1988), cited by Holdaway and Ratsoy (1991), which concluded that

> ...programs offered by external agencies were reasonably effective in increasing awareness but poor at promoting behavioral and organizational changes. These latter changes, in [Bolam's] view, are best achieved by techniques which are specifically aimed at particular learning targets which are based on the individual's practical tasks and experience, which take place as close as possible to the individual's work setting. (p. 6)

Central Office personnel may find that the results obtained in this research provide a starting point for a program of administrative in-services. Areas of concern or difficulty can be more effectively addressed and those areas which are of minimal concern can be treated just as effectively but with a reduced cost in time--a tailor-made administrator training program.

8. Some sort of improved communication and understanding may be required between Central Office and schools. Principals

should not be indicating that the Board and Central Office are sources of stress in their daily affairs.

Implications for Further Study

A variety of possibilities for further investigation arise from the results of this study.

1. A similar study could be carried out under similar conditions in another province for comparison purposes.

2. This study could be carried out in southern Alberta. This may help to determine which factors are most affected by geography and/or population.

3. This study could be compared to results obtained from similar studies conducted in urban areas. Such a comparison may help to determine which factors are most affected by the rural aspect of this study,

4. Studies could be conducted to investigate, in depth, specific variables associated with this study. For example, a study could be done to investigate and compare the variety of tasks associated with the job of principal in small, medium and large schools. Another study could investigate the amount and variety of contact between Central Office and various schools based on the size of the school and its distance from Central Office.

5. Problem teachers seem to be real sources of stress for administrators at the upper grade levels in northern Alberta. A study of the circumstances associated with these cases may discover common problems and lead to solutions.

Appendix

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
EDMONTON, CANADA
T6G 2G5

February 19, 1991

Dear Colleague:

The purpose of the enclosed questionnaire is to gather data so that stressors and dissatisfiers unique to school principals in Northern Alberta can be isolated. This study is being conducted by the undersigned in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Education degree.

Respondents are assured that all returns will be treated confidentially. The information requested in Part A is required to facilitate statistical analysis of the data. Responses will be aggregated and reported in such a manner that neither schools or individuals will be identifiable in the report from this study.

This study has been approved by the department of Education Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta.

I will be happy to answer any questions you might have. Feel free to call me at home (771-2371) or at school (771-3939).

Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided. I would appreciate you response by March 15.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Yours truly,

Donald Chrysanthou

ASSESSMENT OF WORK EXPERIENCE OF PRINCIPALS

Part A: Personal-Educational Data

Please circle the ONE response which gives the correct information about you or your school. In Part A, #4 and Part D please provide the answers as requested.

PLEASE ANSWER EACH ITEM 1-4

1. Sex: 5

   1. Male 2. Female

2. Age (on last birthday): 6

   1. 30 or under
   2. 31-35
   3. 36-40
   4. 41-45
   5. 46-50
   6. 51-55
   7. 56-60
   8. Over 60

3. Which of the following *best* describes your school? 7

   1. Elementary (K-6)
   2. K-9
   3. K-12
   4. Junior High (7-9)
   5. Senior High (10-12)
   6. Junior/Senior High (7-12)

4. How many teachers are in your school (including yourself)? _____ 8-9

5. Your years of teaching experience (as of June 30, 1990) 10

   1. 1 year or less
   2. 2 years
   3. 3-5 years
   4. 6-10 years
   5. 11-15 years
   6. 16-20 years
   7. 21-25 years
   8. 26 or more years

6. Your years of administrative experience (as of June 30, 1990) 11

   1. 1 year or less
   2. 2 years
   3. 3-5 years
   4. 6-10 years
   5. 11-15 years
   6. 16-20 years
   7. 21-25 years
   8. 26 or more years

7. Number of years you have been in your present position (as of June 30, 1990) 12

   1. 1 year or less
   2. 2 years
   3. 3-5 years
   4. 6-10 years
   5. 11-15 years
   6. 16-20 years
   7. 21-25 years
   8. 26 or more years

8. Do you have a regular teaching assignment? 13

   1. Yes 2. No

9. Is your school in a 14

1. County 2. Division 3. Other

10. Estimate the distance of your school to the nearest town (at least 2000 people) 15

1. less than 10 kms
2. 11-30 kms
3. 31-50 kms
4. 51-100 kms
5. Over 100 kms

11. What is the distance from your school to your Central Office? 16

1. Less than 2 kms
2. 2-5 kms
3. 6-10 kms
4. 11-15 kms
5. 16-20 kms
6. 21-25 kms
7. 26-50 kms
8. More than 50 kms

12. On the average, how stressful do you find your work? 17

1. Not stressful
2. Mildly stressful
3. Moderately stressful
4. Considerably stressful
5. Very stressful
6. Extremely stressful

Part B: Job Satisfaction Questionnaire

Please rate your degree of satisfaction with your job according to the following scale:

0	1	2	3	4	5
Dissatisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Considerably Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied

Circle the selected number

In your present position, indicate how you feel about each of these aspects:

1.	Job security	0	1	2	3	4	5	18
2.	The chance to help other people	0	1	2	3	4	5	19
3.	The chance to tell people what to do	0	1	2	3	4	5	20
4.	The opportunity to use your abilities	0	1	2	3	4	5	21
5.	Fringe benefits	0	1	2	3	4	5	22
6.	Your salary	0	1	2	3	4	5	23
7.	The amount of work required	0	1	2	3	4	5	24
8.	Advancement opportunities	0	1	2	3	4	5	25
9.	Freedom to use your own judgement	0	1	2	3	4	5	26
10.	Freedom to use your own methods	0	1	2	3	4	5	27
11.	Relationships with subordinates	0	1	2	3	4	5	28
12.	Relationships with colleagues	0	1	2	3	4	5	29
13.	Relationships with superordinates	0	1	2	3	4	5	30
14.	Methods used in promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5	31
15.	Methods used in promotion	0	1	2	3	4	5	32
16.	Extra tasks associated with your position	0	1	2	3	4	5	33
17.	Physical working conditions	0	1	2	3	4	5	34
18.	The praise you get for doing a good job	0	1	2	3	4	5	35
19.	Degree of autonomy	0	1	2	3	4	5	36
20.	Sense of accomplishment	0	1	2	3	4	5	37
21.	Degree of involvement in important decisions	0	1	2	3	4	5	38
22.	Degree of accountability for your work	0	1	2	3	4	5	39
23.	Your status in the community	0	1	2	3	4	5	40
24.	Recognition by others of your work	0	1	2	3	4	5	41
25.	Social relationships at work	0	1	2	3	4	5	42
26.	Intellectual stimulation	0	1	2	3	4	5	43
27.	Overall satisfaction with your job	0	1	2	3	4	5	44

Part C: Source of Work-Related Stress

Work-related stress is defined as *pressure or overburdening experienced by a person as a result of a situation in the work setting.* Listed below are a number of situations which may or may not be sources of stress to you in your work.

Please indicated by circling the appropriate number how *stressful* each situation *is to you in your work.*

0	1	2	3	4	5
Not Stressful	Mildly Stressful	Moderately Stressful	Considerably Stressful	Very Stressful	Extremely Stressful

1.	Over-sized classes	0	1	2	3	4	5	45
2.	Lack of proper placement for students with special needs	0	1	2	3	4	5	46
3.	Being required to make frequent role changes (e.g., parent, nurse, referee, judge, social worker, policeman)	0	1	2	3	4	5	47
4.	Accommodating to curriculum changes	0	1	2	3	4	5	48
5.	Volume of student evaluation activities	0	1	2	3	4	5	49
6.	Disruptive students	0	1	2	3	4	5	50
7.	Heavy workload	0	1	2	3	4	5	51
8.	Lack of parental support	0	1	2	3	4	5	52
9.	Lack of time during school day to get work done	0	1	2	3	4	5	53
10.	Changing provincial philosophy regarding program	0	1	2	3	4	5	54
11.	Insufficient salary for work done	0	1	2	3	4	5	55
12.	Curriculum changes implemented before materials available	0	1	2	3	4	5	56
13.	Perceived shift in role of central office from "consultative" to "inspection"	0	1	2	3	4	5	57
14.	Student marks used to evaluate teachers	0	1	2	3	4	5	58
15.	Unmotivated students	0	1	2	3	4	5	59
16.	Conflict situations	0	1	2	3	4	5	60
17.	Rapid curriculum change	0	1	2	3	4	5	61
18.	Dealing with burned out staff	0	1	2	3	4	5	62
19.	Problem teachers	0	1	2	3	4	5	63
20.	Time spent dealing with community demands	0	1	2	3	4	5	64
21.	Recruitment and retention of qualified staff	0	1	2	3	4	5	65
22.	Mail and supplies from Central Office	0	1	2	3	4	5	66
23.	Construction of a workable timetable	0	1	2	3	4	5	67

Part D

1. Please list two aspects of your work as principal that are most dissatisfying to you

   1. _____

   2. _____

2. Please describe two aspects of your work as principal that are most stressful to you.

   1. _____

   2. _____